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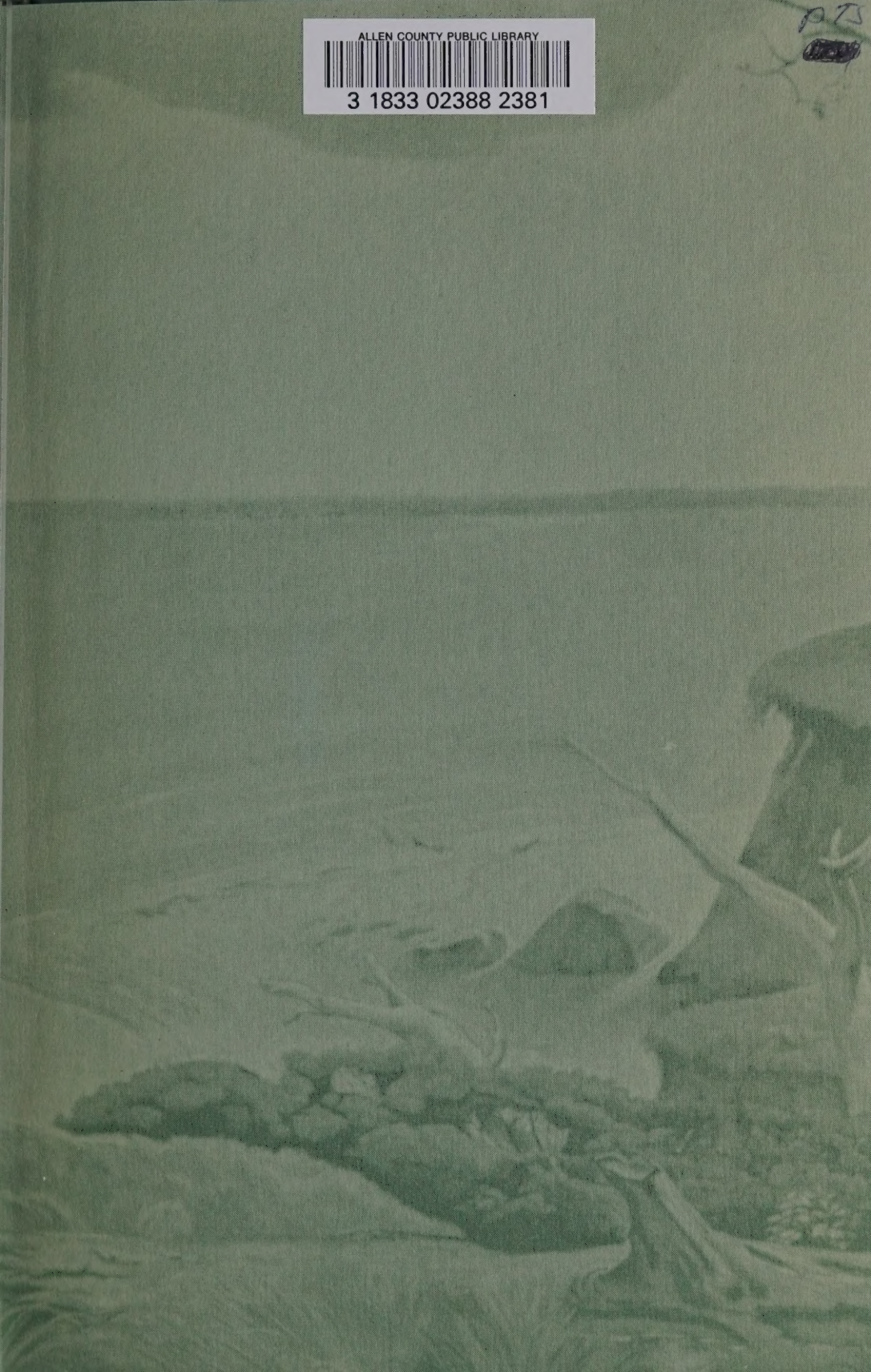


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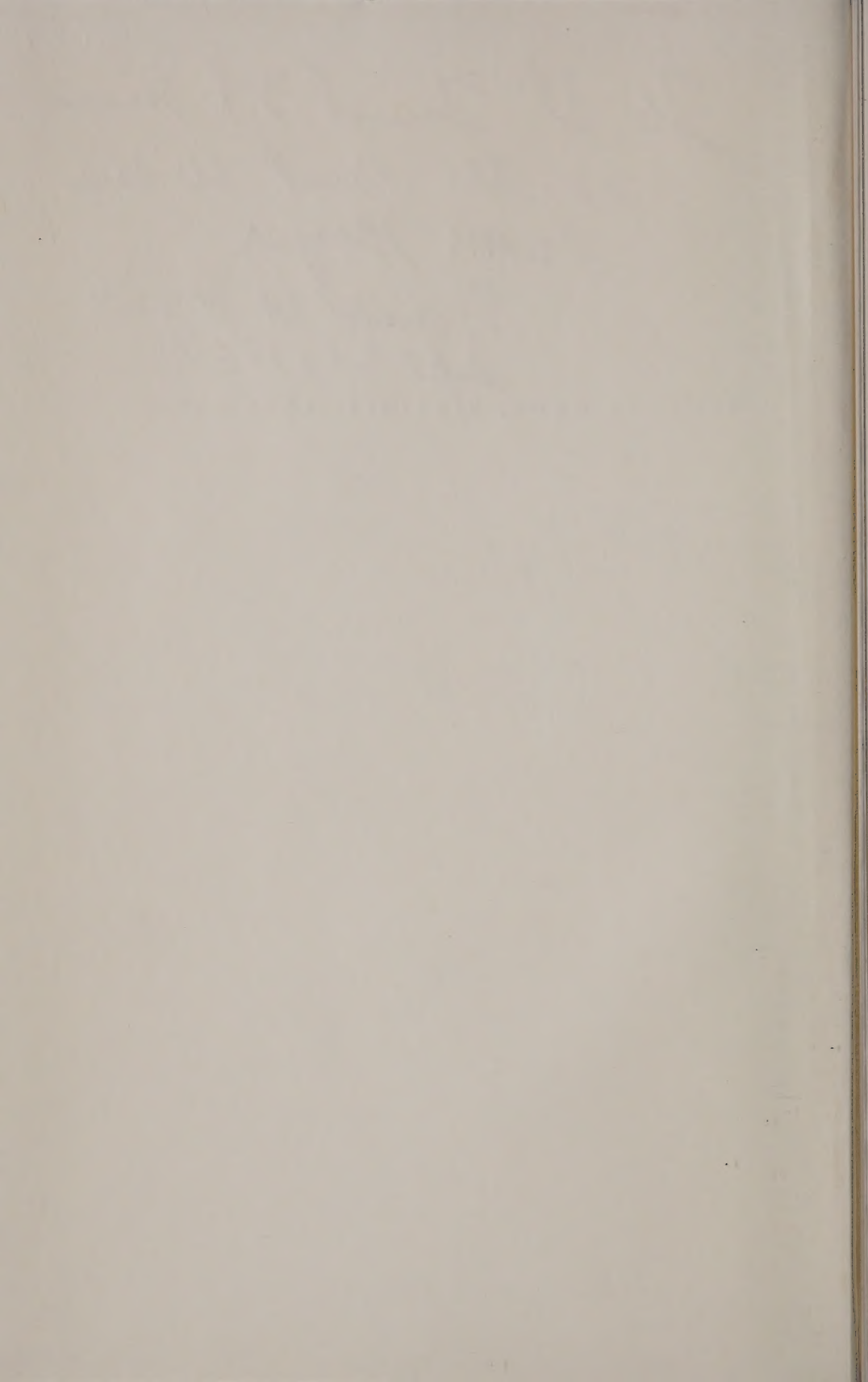


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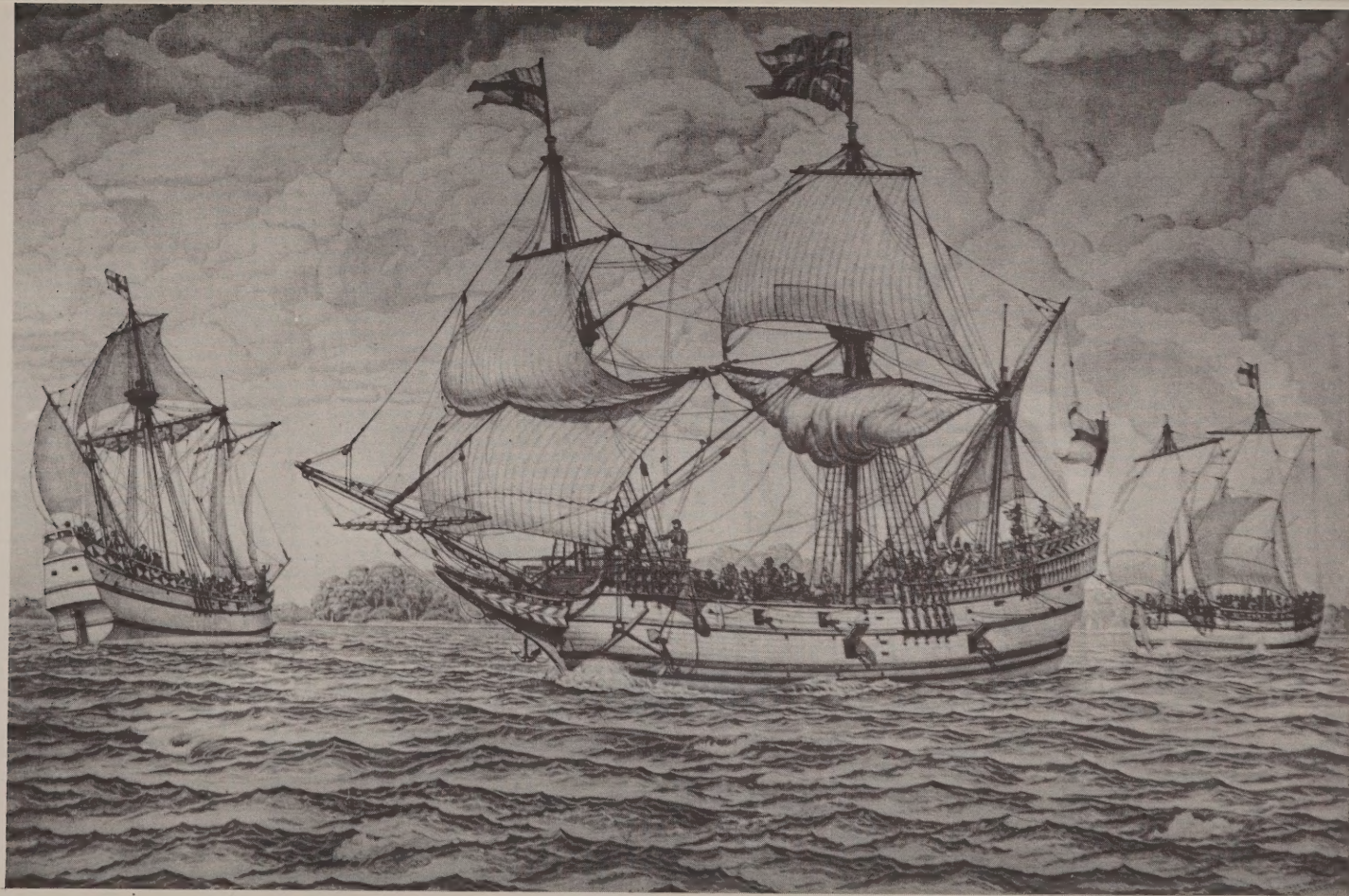
To Lt. General S. P. Soren
with Best Wishes
from Mayor

Donald M. Hyatt
Sept 21, 1967

NEWPORT NEWS, VIRGINIA, 1607-1960







COURTESY, THE MARINERS MUSEUM

SUSAN CONSTANT (center), GODSPEED and pinnace DISCOVERY maneuvering for anchorage in the James River, May 1607. Conceptual study to scale of models of the period by Griffith Baily Coale.

Newport News, Virginia 1607 - 1960

By ANNIE LASH JESTER



Captain Christopher Newport

*from whom Newport News gets its name, was in sole command of
the expedition which left England, 20 December 1606,
and arrived at the Virginia Capes, 26 April 1607.*

1961

THE CITY OF NEWPORT NEWS
VIRGINIA

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Foreword

THIS study was undertaken at the direction of the City Council with the objective of supplying a summary of the history of the consolidated city of Newport News. The purpose has been, insofar as possible, to present a readable account of the important area which has figured prominently since 1607 in every major crisis in the region now the United States of America. An effort has been made to present persons and events in the foreground of major developments of which they were a part.

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The location of the city, commanding both Hampton Roads and the James River, ever has been recognized as vital. Command of Newport's News Point was deemed essential in every major military operation; yet, when the earlier emergencies were over, the strategic site was all but forgotten.

The magnificent harbor with unlimited potentialities for shipping was recognized in 1621 by an enterprising Englishman, Daniel Gookin, who proposed a maritime trading and supply venture. Yet, not for two and a half centuries later was his vision to be realized. Then, Collis P. Huntington, railway magnate, selected the site as the deep water terminus of the Chesapeake and Ohio Railway, the last link in his trans-continental railway system connecting the Pacific with the Atlantic Ocean. Later, he projected and built the Newport News Shipbuilding and Dry Dock Company, a pioneering enterprise in the industrialization of the South. Other developments followed.

Until the turn of the century Newport News was generally known and spoken of as Newport's News. That designation used herein for the earlier period, is in conformity with the

common usage. About 1900 the possessive form for the developing municipality was dropped.

The loss of the major portion of pre-Civil War Warwick County Court records has militated as a serious hindrance to those interested in preparing a history of the area. This account has been assembled from innumerable sources investigated over several decades by the writer, a native and lifelong resident of the Peninsula.

The documentary material was made available by the Archives Division of the Virginia State Library and the Virginia Historical Society, Richmond; by the Archives Department of the Library of the College of William and Mary, Williamsburg; and at the offices of the Clerks of Courts, No. 1 and No. 2, Newport News, and at the office of the Clerk of Courts, Hampton. Messrs. F. Baxter Barham, George S. Deshazor, Jr., and deputy Clerk John I. Frost expedited research in their respective offices.

The Library of The Mariners Museum, Newport News, provided use of rare volumes and prints, and Mr. John L. Lochhead, librarian, and Miss Cerinda W. Evans, librarian emeritus, were especially helpful in directing attention to items of interest and supplying references. Published volumes and pamphlets in the Virginiana collection of the Newport News Public Library were constantly consulted and here Miss Lottie Driver, librarian, and the staff assisted. Also, appreciation is due Mrs. Evelyn Shreeves at the Main Street Library for her interest and encouragement.

We are particularly indebted to Allan Jones for the reproduction on the end papers of his "Captain Newport and Men at the Site of Newport News." This artist's conception of the scene was commissioned, 1957, by the Newport News Public Library Inc., and executed in a mural painting. The conceptual drawing reproduced on the title page, also, is the work of Allan Jones, and we extend to him sincere appreciation for its use.

While the material for this study had been assembled in large part over the years, preparation in the present form was achieved through the initiative of Mayor O. J. Brittingham, Jr. To him and to the other members of the City Council, Messrs. William C. Bowen, J. Fred Christie, Alfred M. Monfalcone, Marvin M. Murchinson, Jr., Robert B. Smith and Paul S. Ward, who sponsored publication, our thanks are due. The City Manager, Mr. Joseph C. Biggins, has been unfailing in his support, and through him assistance also was given by Mr. C. L. Williams, city clerk, and Mr. Sol Ellenson, director of public works.

To facilitate development of the topic Consolidation, Mr. Richard Newman turned over the records of the official committee, read the manuscript and offered valuable suggestions. Others who generously gave help were: Dr. E. G. Swem, who from time to time over the years directed attention to sources of information, Mrs. S. S. Coston of Hampton, Delegate Lewis A. McMurran, Mathew Fulgham and Alexander C. Brown of the staff of the *Daily Press*, Captain Nelson Smith of Cedar Grove, Mrs. Florence Bayles, who typed the manuscript, and my husband Lewis T. Jester, who supplied both information and advice.

To the institutions and persons named and to all others, who read the manuscript and gave the benefit of their thoughts, the writer is indebted and extends thanks. Appreciation also is due to those departed citizens of the Community, who had granted interviews, or who were helpful in guiding the writer to little known source material. Among these were: Mr. Simon Curtis of Lee Hall, Miss Betty Curtis of End View, Mrs. Philip W. Hiden, Mr. Walter B. Livezey, long-time president of the Old Dominion Land Company, and Mr. William T. Stauffer, attorney.

—A.L.J.

April 1961

Introduction

I AM pleased to introduce *Newport News, Virginia, 1607-1960* with a brief statement.

This is the story of the development of an area that has played a significant role in the life of the state and of the nation. In the belief that a permanent record should be made of events which occurred in the former county and city of Warwick and the former city of Newport News, the City Council of the consolidated city of Newport News, on July 27th, 1959, authorized Mrs. Lewis T. Jester to undertake the compilation of this book.

The task has been completed and I wish to express to Mrs. Jester our sincere appreciation for her painstaking work. Also, I wish to commend this book to the citizens in general and to the schools in particular. I believe we have here a source of information that will be invaluable in helping our people understand and appreciate the efforts of those who have made our city what it is today.

O. J. BRITTINGHAM, JR., *Mayor*
City of Newport News, Virginia

Contents

	PAGE
<i>Foreword</i>	v
<i>Introduction</i>	ix
<i>Illustrations</i>	xiii

PART ONE

CONSOLIDATION and EARLY HISTORY

CHAPTER

1. <i>The Greater City of Newport News</i>	3
2. <i>Early Settlement</i>	15
3. <i>Local Government</i>	25
4. <i>Plantations</i>	34
5. <i>Religion</i>	48
6. <i>Bacon's Rebellion</i>	55
7. <i>Economic and Social Life</i>	60
8. <i>Revolutionary War</i>	65
9. <i>Post Revolutionary War Period</i>	77
10. <i>Civil War</i>	85

PART TWO

INDUSTRIALIZATION

CHAPTER	PAGE
11. <i>Reconstruction and Rebirth.</i>	103
12. <i>The Port Created.</i>	108
13. <i>The Town Laid Out</i>	114
14. <i>Industrial Development</i>	119
15. <i>The City Chartered</i>	124
16. <i>The Turn of the Century</i>	131
17. <i>World War I</i>	136
18. <i>A New City Government</i>	145
19. <i>World War II</i>	149
20. <i>Governmental Changes in Warwick</i>	155
21. <i>Education</i>	158
22. <i>Recreation and Culture</i>	165
23. <i>Economic Strength</i>	169
24. <i>The Future</i>	172
25. <i>Population 1623-1960</i>	176
<i>Chronology by Alexander Crosby Brown</i>	181
<i>Bibliography</i>	205
<i>Index</i>	209

Illustrations

Susan Constant, Godspeed and Discovery Frontispiece

FACING PAGE

Warwick County Courthouse, 1862 30

Warwick County Courthouse, 1892-1896 30

Map: The Peninsula Between James and York Rivers 38

The Battle of the Ironclads 86

Newport News Point, 1859 102

Newport News, 1907 102

Newport News Point, 1960 110

Newport News Shipbuilding and Dry Dock Company 118

Sentinel of the Sea 118

Victory Arch, 1919 140

Welcome to 29th Division, 1919 140

The Mariners Museum 166

Queen Elizabeth's arrival at Newport News 170

PART

II

Consolidation and Early History

The Greater City of Newport News

When you have made choice of the river on which you mean to settle . . . and to the end that you be not surprised as the French were in Florida by Molindus [Menendez] and the Spaniard in the same place by the French, you shall do well to make this double provision. First, erect a "little stoure" at the mouth of the river that may lodge some ten men, with whom you shall leave a light boat, that when any fleet shall be in sight, they may come with speed to give you warning.¹

THIS injunction was among the directions given Captain Christopher Newport by the Virginia Company of London, 1606, before he departed from England with the three small ships, *Susan Constant*, *Godspeed* and *Discovery*, and one hundred five adventurers to plant in Virginia the first permanent English settlement in the new world. The look-out point ordered established at the mouth of the river called James,² on which the colonists settled, and identified, 1619, as Newport's News, marks the harbor of the greater city of Newport News, latitude 37°, 38', now spread out over sixty-five square miles with a population of 113,662.³ The municipality incorporated 1 July 1958, embraces the old city of Newport News, chartered 1896,⁴ and former city of Warwick, chartered 1952,⁵ the latter having been incorporated from the former county of Warwick which had been created as one of the eight original shires in the colony of Virginia in 1634.⁶

The City of Newport News is the Atlantic deep water terminus of the Chesapeake and Ohio Railway, established 1881.⁷ The ample harbor shelters shipping plying to and from all parts of the world, carrying particularly coal, tobacco, products from the midwest, ore and oil from South America and other commodities. The city is also the location of the plant of the Newport News Shipbuilding and Dry Dock Company, chartered 1886

as the Chesapeake Dry Dock and Construction Company,⁸ where are built both commercial vessels in promotion of peacetime trade and naval vessels for the far flung protection of American shores and the sea lanes that require safe passage for trade around the world. Within the city is Fort Eustis, headquarters of the United States Army Transportation Training Command. Nearby are Fort Monroe, headquarters of the United States Continental Army Command, and Langley Air Force Base, at which are located the headquarters of the Tactical Air Command and quarters of the National Aeronautics and Space Administration. Adjoining is the city of Hampton.

Consolidation

Incorporation of the sixty-five square mile area into one greater city was accomplished by referendum brought about through the interest of citizens.⁹ Many persons residing in the area recognized the need for overall planning and political unity in the region originally united, then separated, and which population wise had become again one community.

Population Expansion Begins

Industrial expansion attendant upon World War I, 1914-1918, accompanied by the inevitable population growth, brought about an overflow of home seekers beyond the four square mile limit of the city of Newport News. The village of Hilton, four miles distant from Newport News, available 1918, as a war time housing project, was the first major expansion¹⁰ into the hitherto almost entirely agricultural area of Warwick County. There had been a gradual extension of home building in Elizabeth City County, contiguous to Newport News on the east.

Notwithstanding the naval holiday projected in 1920, following which, under the terms of the Naval Disarmament Conference, the Shipyard lost seventy million in contracts in February 1922,¹¹ the population remained remarkably stable. This

was due to factors to be dealt with hereafter. The nationwide depression beginning 1928-1929 likewise left its imprint upon the community though the effects of it locally were not felt to a marked degree until the early 1930's, by which time palliative relief measures had been undertaken on a national scale.

Thus, with a normal population as a stabilizer, the area was prepared to meet the impact of conditions brought about in 1939 by the outbreak in Europe of World War II. Almost immediately plans for the physical expansion of the plant of the Shipyard, in event of an emergency, were motivated. Port activities at the terminal of the Chesapeake and Ohio Railway were greatly accelerated, with resulting area economic development. Then, with the entry of the United States into the conflict in 1941 and the designation of Hampton Roads as a major port of embarkation, the Newport News-Warwick area became the center for the movement of troops, equipment and supplies.¹² Consequently, the city was fairly bursting at the seams to contain a wartime population of 100,000 persons. Thus, at the cessation of war in 1945, a crowded populace was ready for its overflow into the adjacent counties of Elizabeth City and Warwick.

Trek to the Suburbs

The availability of building material, unobtainable during war years, together with federal financing of home building, sent eager homeseekers into the ample adjoining territories. Conveniences available made the trek to the suburbs even more rapid. Better roads built as a wartime measure, the availability of private automobiles, better public transportation, the extension of electricity, telephone and water lines to outlying areas, much of which had been accomplished to care for temporary military installations and housing for war workers, accelerated the development of areas outside the city of Newport News.¹³

With this population movement to the surrounding territory, the unfortunate situation developed whereby thousands of persons who earned their livelihoods in Newport News or were dependent directly or indirectly on the business and industry centered in the urban area, were excluded from participation in choosing the city's governing body by reason of residence outside the corporate limits.

Five-Way Consolidation Attempted

The inequity of this situation became increasingly apparent. Thus, in 1950 a five-way consolidation with the nearby city of Hampton and town of Phoebus and the counties of Warwick and Elizabeth City was attempted, but failed by reason of an adverse vote in Hampton, Elizabeth City County and Phoebus.¹⁴

City Finances

Meanwhile, Newport News, already in a favorable financial situation by reason of maturing bond issues for public improvements, such as streets, sewers, drainage, schools, bridges and public buildings was growing even more financially secure. Expanded port and shipbuilding activities sent large tax revenues into the coffers of the city, while the waterworks system, supplying the entire lower Peninsula and owned by the city of Newport News, not only was a utility vital to the entire lower Peninsula but returned a comfortable revenue into the city's treasury in lieu of taxes.¹⁵

On the other hand the fast growing outlying areas, dependent almost altogether on tax revenues from home owners and small businesses had reached the development stage at which the need for city improvements was vital. These, such as highways, drainage, hard-surfaced streets, sewers, bridges and underpasses, not to speak of schools for the rapidly growing adolescent population, pointed to the absolute necessity for overall planning if the area was to attain its potential in development. Otherwise,

it was evident that the region geographically one, would continue under a severe handicap.

Neighboring Communities Incorporate

Moreover, the situation had been rendered even more acute, for since the attempt at consolidation made in 1950, the picture had changed. Hampton, Phoebus and Elizabeth City, through an enabling act of the Virginia Assembly passed in 1952 and by vote of the electorate, had united to become a city of the first class.¹⁶ Warwick County through a similar act and vote of the people was permitted to incorporate also into a city in 1952.¹⁷ Newport News, thus, was completely hemmed in, with no possibility of extending boundaries through the then existing annexation laws. Hence, the community vastly important economically to the entire lower Peninsula was threatened with political starvation.

Citizens Seek Consolidation

Recognizing the seriousness of the situation, a group of citizens met informally, 8 January 1955, to explore the possibilities of uniting the lower Peninsula into one municipality. They were: W. E. Blewett, Jr., Robert C. Cutler, J. Cargill Johnson, Charles K. Hutchens, Lewis A. McMurren, Jr., Richard Newman, Sinclair Phillips, Admiral N. L. Rawlings, Judge Herbert G. Smith and J. B. Woodward, Jr. To them the solution of the dilemma was another attempt at consolidation — the three communities, if possible, and if not, two of them.

Leaders for Three-Way Consolidation

At this same informal gathering, J. B. Woodward, Jr., agreed to head the movement for consolidation in Warwick. Subsequently, Dr. Russell von Lehn Buxton was selected to head the movement in Newport News, and the late Colonel Harry R. Houston, long interested in unity of the lower Peninsula,

consented to lead the movement in Hampton. As the active work got under way, Thomas P. Chisman, assisted by Hunter B. Andrews, took on the leadership in Hampton.

Funds with which to meet expenses of the movement were privately subscribed by interested citizens. Meanwhile, three attorneys, E. Sclater Montague of Hampton, Franklin O. Blechman of Warwick, and Richard Newman of Newport News, were asked to examine the statutes relative to consolidation of communities. They found the law somewhat nebulous and advised further legislation both for clarification and to make specific the terms and the procedure more flexible under which communities could proceed to unite. Accordingly, legislation was drawn, presented to the Assembly by the Peninsular delegation and subsequently passed at the 1956 session.

With the preliminaries cared for, mass meetings of citizens in the three communities were arranged; in Hampton on 15 June 1955; in Newport News on 16 June 1955; and in Warwick on 17 June 1955, each meeting having been called by the respective chairman. At these gatherings a joint citizens committee for overall consolidation was authorized, and an executive committee named as follows: J. B. Woodward, Jr., Dr. Russell von Lehn Buxton, Thomas P. Chisman, Hunter B. Andrews, Franklin O. Blechman, R. F. Flaxington, Richard Newman, Sinclair Phillips and W. R. Van Buren, Jr.

Citizens' petitions setting forth the objective of ultimate consolidation of the three communities were filed with the councils of the three cities and with Judge Herbert G. Smith of the Newport News Corporation Court, Judge Frank Kearney of the Circuit Court serving Newport News and Hampton and Judge Conway H. Sheild, Jr., of the Circuit Court serving Warwick. By the latter part of January 1956, the proposed charter for the consolidated city was ready for presentation to the three Councils, having previously been drafted and agreed upon by charter committees working in each city under the auspices of procedural committees.

Permissive Legislation

At this point, the Virginia legislature in session was urgently requested to enact the permissive legislation for consolidation. On 31 March 1956 such remedial measures as were necessary, including the Hallet Act,¹⁸ an altogether new piece of legislation, were signed by Governor Stanley. Thus, the way was cleared for holding a referendum at the request of the three Councils, or if not by them, at the request of the citizens by their direct petition to the courts.

The proposed charter for the city-to-be, agreed upon in the three cities by 31 May 1956, specified that the referendum should be held on the basis of a name previously selected for the anticipated consolidated city. The proposal that *Hampton Roads* be the name had been blocked by the Norfolk delegation in the Assembly, who pushed through a prohibitive measure regarding the use of that name by any given community.¹⁹ The three Councils in a joint meeting then projected *Port City* which, of itself, foredoomed the plan for overall consolidation.

On 6 November 1956 the referendum for three-way consolidation was held and defeated by 867 votes in Hampton out of a total in that city of 13,243 ballots cast.²⁰

Two-Way Consolidation Projected

With Hampton thus self-eliminated, Newport News and Warwick citizens let no time elapse. On 27 November 1956 under the leadership of J. B. Woodward, Jr., of Warwick and Russell von Lehn Buxton of Newport News, a two-way consolidation mass meeting was held in the Hilton School in Warwick. Citizens' petitions for such consolidation accordingly were filed with Judge Smith and Judge Sheild, thus by-passing the two Councils, a procedure then permitted under the terms of the recent Hallet Act. The Judges were asked, as provided in the act, to set a date for a referendum which the citizens, signing the petition, asked be set for January 1957. Judge Sheild

deferred the request, setting the referendum date for 9 July 1957. This delay gave the Councils of the two cities time to study the matter and act. Both Councils then appointed charter committees, who met frequently, worked faithfully and finally presented a charter agreed upon by Councils of both cities by the 14 May 1957.

Incidentally, without the provision of the Hallet Act, permitting citizens to by-pass the Councils of their respective communities in seeking a referendum, agreement on the charter probably never could have been had. The Hallet Act served as a "pusher." One way or another citizens of both communities were determined to bring about consolidation.

The Vote

With the Council-inspired charter now agreed upon in both cities Judge Sheild revoked the date previously set; then, a new balloting date, 16 July 1957, was designated by the two Judges under the statutes which antedated the Hallet Act. The vote for two-way consolidation, not without some expected opposition, nevertheless carried by a vote of 4,398 to 873 in Newport News and a vote of 3,938 to 3,253 in Warwick.²¹

The Name and the Councilmen

The charter agreed upon by the two city Councils provided for a separate election for the selection of a name for the new consolidated city, and for the election of seven new Councilmen to be inducted into office, 1 July 1958, on which date consolidation was to be effective. On 10 September 1957 voters selected the name NEWPORT NEWS and on 5 November 1957, chose the following as councilmen: O. J. Brittingham, Jr., William C. Bowen, J. Fred Christie, Alfred M. Monfalcone, Marvin M. Murchison, Jr., Robert B. Smith and Paul S. Ward.

City Manager Designated

The adopted charter provided for unofficial meetings of the group to lay the groundwork for uniting the governments of

the two cities — an undertaking without precedent in Virginia. O. J. Brittingham, Jr., who had led the councilmanic ticket was chosen to serve as presiding officer. At the initial gathering, Joseph C. Biggins who had served the old city of Newport News as City Manager thirty-two years was designated the future City Manager. He was directed to proceed with plans of organization.

At the informal meetings the anticipated problems were considered and ways and means devised to handle them. Organization proceeded at a steady pace; a six months' budget of \$7,160,866 was tentatively approved, and the most necessary ordinances, those relating to the Courts and the police particularly, studied carefully and made ready for adoption. The designation by the City Manager of executive heads of the various departments of the new city, together with the adjustment of pay differentials of employees for comparable jobs in the two cities, and adoption of a retirement system were matters of major concern. Also, steps were taken toward a mandatory adjustment in the wide differential existing in the tax structure of the two cities. To this end a Board of Real Estate Assessors was agreed upon, whose responsibility over a several-year period would be to effect the assessment of all property on a unified basis.²²

In the meantime the Councils of the old city of Newport News and the city of Warwick met in their regular sessions to handle routine business, both cooperating insofar as possible toward the approaching merger.

*Consolidation Effected*²³

On 1 July 1958, the elected councilmen met in the Corporation Court room in Newport News, at 10:00 a.m. and were sworn into office by Clerk of Courts, F. Baxter Barham, following which O. J. Brittingham, Jr., was elected Mayor and A. M. Monfalcone, Vice-Mayor. The meeting then recessed to as-

semble again at 3:00 p.m. in the newly designated Council Chamber in the former city of Warwick on Main Street.

The intervening hours were taken up with formal ceremonies at the War Memorial Museum of Virginia located at Huntington Park. Judge Herbert G. Smith, chairman of the Consolidation Day celebration, presided and the address of the occasion was given by the Governor of Virginia, the Honorable J. Lindsay Almond, Jr. There followed a parade which passed the reviewing stand erected at Sixty-Fourth Street and Huntington Avenue, the former dividing line between the two cities. Mrs. Homer L. Ferguson, resident of Warwick, widow of the late Homer L. Ferguson, president of the Newport News Shipbuilding and Dry Dock Company, 1915-1946, and Mrs. Philip W. Hiden, resident of old Newport News, and widow of the first mayor of that city under the city manager form of government, cut the ribbons symbolically dividing the two communities. For the purpose they used the same pair of mammoth scissors which had severed the ribbons at the opening of the James River bridge, 1928, connecting southside Virginia with the Peninsula.

At the afternoon meeting of the Council of the consolidated city, the first order of business was the formal appointment of Joseph C. Biggins as City Manager, after which the budget previously agreed upon was adopted and the most necessary ordinances considered in previous informal sessions officially passed.

The six months' preparation and study given to the anticipated needs of the greater city were rewarding and the amalgamation of the two communities was remarkably smooth. By 1 July 1959, the greater city of Newport News, then, the third largest in population in Virginia²⁴ and the largest in area, had achieved the objective of its public spirited citizens in a well ordered municipal organization with plans looking toward future developments.

NOTES

1. Alexander Brown, *The Genesis of the United States*, I, 81; Edward Arber and A. G. Bradley, *Travels and Works of Captain John Smith*, I, xxxiv.
2. Smith's map (Frontispiece, *Ibid.*, II) shows the present body of water known as Hampton Roads as Powhatan (James) Flu (River). The exposed entrance at Poynt Comfort was in immediate proximity to the Indian village Kecoughtan and thus not available to the colonists in 1607. The next logical location for a look-out post was the site here noted.
3. U. S. Census, 1960.
4. See Chapter 15, *post*.
5. See Chapter 20, *post*.
6. See Chapter 3, *post*.
7. See Chapter 12, *post*.
8. See Chapter 14, *post*.
9. The account of consolidation of the old city of Newport News and the city of Warwick was compiled from the official records of the Over-All Consolidation Committee, in cooperation with Richard Newman, attorney, who served as secretary of the Committee.
10. See Chapter 17, *post*.
11. *Shipyards Bulletin*, November 1959, p. 10.
12. See Chapter 19, *post*.
13. *Newport News During the Second World War*, 70-72.
14. Five-way consolidation referendum, 21 March 1950: Hampton, for: 303, against: 876; Elizabeth City County, for: 1,716, against: 2,801; Phoebus, for: 102, against: 620 (Election Returns, 1950, Office of Clerk of Courts, Hampton, Virginia).
15. Municipal Budgets, City of Newport News, 1945-1950.
16. Election held 17 June 1952, and by agreement the three governmental units were incorporated to become the City of Hampton, 1 July 1952 (Common Law Book No. 32, p. 283, office of Clerk of Courts, Hampton, Virginia).
17. Alexander Crosby Brown, "Warwick Becomes City Today," *Daily Press*, 16 July 1952, p. 13.
18. For Hallett act, see *Acts of the Assembly* 1956 (Va.), Chapter 552, p. 777, also cited as sections 15-231.4:1 *et seq.* of the *Code of Virginia* 1950, as amended; for other consolidation legislation, see House Bills Nos. 352, 487, and 735 (Va. Assembly).

19. *Acts of Assembly 1956* (Va.), Chapter 553, at p. 802.
20. Official count certified by Judge Kearney and filed in the office of the Clerk of Courts, Hampton, Va.
21. Official counts certified by Judge Smith and Judge Sheild and filed in respective offices of Clerks of Courts No. 1 and No. 2, Newport News.
22. The facts of preliminary organization were assembled from notes made by the writer at the unofficial meetings; also, see official records, City of Newport News; also, file of clippings from the *Daily Press* and *Times-Herald* assembled by Over-All Consolidation Committee.
23. *Times-Herald*, 1 July 1958; *Daily Press*, 2 July 1958.
24. Fourth largest according to 1960 census; Portsmouth, third largest.

Early Settlement

CAPTAIN CHRISTOPHER NEWPORT and his company of adventurers, who had arrived in the Chesapeake Bay, 26 April 1607, had been bound from England by way of the West Indies since 20 December 1606. As they rounded the point which marks the confluence of the present Hampton Roads with the James River, they called the location Point Hope¹ because it put them in good hope of finding a suitable landing place. After selecting a marshy island some thirty miles up the river as a site for their first settlement, and after some exploring up the river, it seems highly probable that Captain Newport, always meticulous in carrying out instruction, located the designated "look-out point" on the sandy bar at the mouth of the James where but a little way inland there was an ample spring of fresh water, and also a creek making inland.

Newport News Identified

This location is identified in the records of the Virginia Company of London, 11 November 1619, as Newport's News. At that time certain of the colonists at Kecoughtan were to be dispossessed of their land holdings in the area of Hampton River and the former Indian village of Kecoughtan to make way for an assignment of a large acreage for use of the Virginia Company's tenants; hence, they were authorized to choose anew their seats (land holdings) between *Newport's News* and Kecoughtan.² Again, on 20 January 1620 the Company's records carry an account of a ship driven ashore in a storm off Newport's News.³ The incident may not have been recorded but for an unfortunate quarrel between Captain William Epes and Captain Edward Roecroft. In the heat of the argument Captain Epes struck Roecroft over the head with his sword still sheathed

in the scabbard, and cleft Roecroft's skull, from which hearty blow, the victim died in a few days.

The Name

There is no record to account for the actual naming of Newport News, known generally prior to 1900 as Newport's News. Presumably, the name was given to the location as the source of the first news of Captain Newport's several arrivals in Virginia.⁴ He made four voyages to the newly established colony subsequent to that in 1607, kept the struggling settlement supplied, landed new colonists, and, equally important, brought the *news*, including official communications, from England. For four difficult years he supplied that vital link with the homeland that kept the colony alive. So important was the commodity — *news* — that Captain John Smith designated it as Newport's chief cargo, yet he complained that the diligent mariner was being paid £100 a year for his transportation services.⁵ Newport's last voyage was made in 1611, at which time he brought Sir Thomas Dale who was responsible for reorganization in the colony and placing the colonial enterprise on a firm basis. In 1612 Captain Newport went into the service of the East India Company and died in the Orient, 1617.⁶

Indian Territory

When the white man came to Virginia the territory along the James River, now Newport News, was the province of the Kecoughtan Indians (Kecoughtan means inhabitants of the great town).⁷ Their village was in the area of the Kecoughtan Veterans Facility in Hampton. These Indians held sway over the lower Peninsula between the James and the York Rivers and had been in the area since the late 1590's. Prior to their tenure over the region it appears that a tribe of the Chesapeake, whose principal village was in the vicinity of the present site of Norfolk,⁸ dwelt in the Kecoughtan area, maintaining there a village of about 300 oval bark houses with cleared land of

about 3000 acres, well cared for by the 1000 or so Indians.⁹ This account was given by William Strachey, who in 1612 wrote a history of his travels in Virginia.¹⁰

Strachey further narrated that Powhatan's medicine men had warned him in a prophecy that a nation would arise from the Chesapeake Bay area that would bring an end to his empire. In a determination to forestall his doom, Powhatan bided his time and when the old chieftan at Kecoughtan died and the tribe was in confusion, he craftily sent in his warriors, and surprising the inhabitants of Kecoughtan, slew the men and sent the women and children into exile in a remote region of the Pianketank. With matters thus under control Powhatan dispatched his son Pochins with a small band of his own people to Kecoughtan.¹¹

Indians Dispossessed

These were the Indians who extended a friendly welcome to the English settlers when they arrived at the Indian village, 30 April 1607.¹² The friendship, however, was not of permanent duration, for Indians roaming the territory along the bank of the James River on the 9 July, 1610, lay in wait for a small company of colonists as they sailed on a journey down the James River. The white men spying a canoe adrift sent one of their number, Humphrey Blunt to rescue the craft. The Indians in hiding, slew Blunt as he approached the boat. The area at which this incident supposedly occurred, thereafter was called Blunt [Blount] Point. Following this evidence of ill will, the colonists drove the Kecoughtans out of their village and by a bill of ejectment legally drawn up and recorded, they took over officially the territory, including the village formerly claimed by the Indians.¹³

Mulberry Island

Mulberry Island across the Warwick River from Blunt Point is also identified, 8 June 1610. At that time the colonists at

Jamestown, sick and disheartened, had decided to abandon their settlement and return to England. They had embarked for the return trip and had sailed as far as Mulberry Point (upper end of Mulberry Island) when they were met by a long boat with the news that Lord De La Warr's fleet of three ships had arrived bringing new settlers and ample supplies. Thus, the Jamestown colonists turned back and the English settlement was saved.¹⁴

Early Land Patents

These two localities, Blunt Point and Mulberry Island, were areas for some of the very early land patents assigned in Virginia,¹⁵ following a change of policy during the regime of Sir Thomas Dale as Marshall of Virginia, 1611-1616. The terms agreed upon in the Virginia Company before settlement stipulated that there should be no individual assignments of land during the first years of the settlement. However, the communal plan under which the colonists lived during these years was terminated while Dale reorganized the colonial enterprise. Immediately following his regime a policy was adopted of assigning rights for one hundred acres to every individual who had come to Virginia prior to 1616. Those who came after 1616 were entitled to fifty acres each, the assignment of land going either to the immigrant or to the person who paid his passage. Those bringing numbers of colonists accumulated rights for acreage accordingly.¹⁶

As soon as land was available for private ownership the territory near Jamestown was sought after for patents. By 1619 William Pierce, Captain of the Guard at Jamestown, had received a grant of 650 acres in the Mulberry Island area, lying upon Warwick [Blunt Point] River. Pierce's son-in-law John Rolfe (after the death of Pocahontas, 1617, Rolfe married Joane Pierce) also held land on the island which he bequeathed, in his will dated 1621, to his daughter Elizabeth. With Captain Roger Smith, Pierce and Rolfe owned in all 1700 acres in

the Mulberry Island area, which is recorded in the 1625 list of land owners sent to England.¹⁷

Stanley Hundred

When Sir George Yeardley came to Virginia in 1618 to serve as Governor, he was allocated 1000 acres for his own use. He chose the Mulberry Island area for this tract which he called Stanley Hundred, a name selected in honor of his wife's family, who were prominent in England. The name still survives in Stanley precinct of Newport News. Stanley Hundred was disposed of after Yeardley's death in 1627 to Lieutenant Thomas Flint, who, on 20 January 1628/29 conveyed the land to John Brewer, merchant, who later served as Commissioner for Warwick.¹⁸

Warwick River

Warwick River named for Robert Rich, Earl of Warwick,¹⁹ is identified as such in extant patents dated 1627,²⁰ by which time it appears that practically all of the available acreage along the estuary, considered a safe harbor for the small ships of the day, had been assigned. The 1625 list of patents records, in addition to the Pierce-Rolfe-Smith holdings, thirteen land owners in the Blunt Point vicinity, including Samuel Mathews, later Governor of Virginia and Edward Waters, from whom Waters Creek, now Lake Maury, gets its name. The thirteen colonists had been assigned a total of 2200 acres. Below Blunt Point there were ten land owners with a total of 1390 acres, 500 of which had been assigned to Sir Francis Wyatt, Governor of Virginia.²¹

Queen's Hith

While the land of Thomas Harwood, who had come to Virginia, 1623, is not recorded in the 1625 list, he was living on Mulberry Island with his wife in 1625 when the muster of the inhabitants of Virginia was taken.²² To his plantation called

Queen's Hith (Hundred) he added acreage from time to time, some of which lay at the head of Skiffe's (Keith's) Creek.²³ His holdings were a landmark of the area, as will be noted later.

Mulberry Island Church, 1627

Mulberry Island and surrounding territory was sufficiently well populated before 1627 to justify the erection of a church there, for by that date a land patent marks boundaries by the church building.²⁴ Patentees were required to settle the land within a stated period or it reverted to the colonial government. These land assignments along the James and the Warwick Rivers together with the Gookin patent, an account of which follows, practically absorbed all the land along the main waterways, which at that early period provided the only avenues of transportation.

Gookin Settlement, 1621

So favorable were the broadsides published in England regarding the colony of Virginia in 1620 that Daniel Gookin, an Englishman, who had made an unsuccessful venture in Ireland, began to consider making a settlement in the new land.²⁵ His friends Captain William Neuce and Captain Thomas Neuce were named in the broadsides as recipients of privileges available.²⁶ Gookin forthwith projected a shipping enterprise, requested from the Virginia Company that he be assigned land in the new world and set about organizing his company and outfitting his ship.

Gookin's arrival in Virginia, 22 November 1621, is recorded by Governor Wyatt, who announced in his communication to England that Gookin had been seated at Newport's News in accordance with his desire.²⁷ He had come in the *Flying Harte* with a company of fifty men and some thirty passengers aboard. In addition, he had brought cattle and all supplies and necessities that his men might require.

Immediately upon arrival his men set about erecting their habitations and threw up a palisade for protection where there were mounted three large guns. So well were they entrenched that when the massacre of Good Friday 1622 occurred Gookin declined the order to move his company to Jamestown for safety.²⁸ Gookin remained at his plantation until the end of April, and, returning to England, carried the first news of the Indian treachery and the holocaust in the colony.

In England, he set about at once to secure the land patent for a *particular plantation* promised to him, and to outfit the *Providence* to supply his plantation²⁹ which he called Marie's Mount in honor of his wife. As his personal affairs in England were not settled, Gookin did not return to Virginia though his ship, somewhat battered in the crossing, arrived in poor shape in Virginia. Gookin died before he could again come to the colony.

Subsequently Daniel Gookin's two sons, Daniel, Jr., and John came to Newport's News and lived at Marie's Mount where in 1633 a Dutch mariner Peter DeVries visited them.³⁰

While the patent for a *particular plantation* (one of large acreage with special privileges),³¹ which Gookin sought was not forthcoming from the Virginia Company during his lifetime, his sons eventually received from the Company 1831 acres along the north bank of the James River.

Daniel Gookin, Jr., a Puritan, left Virginia 1642, settled briefly in Maryland and finally established himself among more agreeable religious company in Massachusetts where his descendants in the Quincy family are numerous.³² John Gookin, also a Puritan, with his brother, sold the Newport's News plantation to John Chandler³³ and took up land on the south side of the James River in Nansemond County directly across from Newport's News. He married the widow of Adam Thoroughgood, but left no descendants.

NOTES

1. Edward Arber and A. G. Bradley, *Travels and Works of Captain John Smith, Frontispiece*, v. II; Tyndall's map 1608 does not mark the point (Alexander Brown, *The Genesis of the United States*, op. 150).
2. Susan Myra Kingsbury, *The Records of the Virginia Company of London*, III, 227; also see John Bush's complaint to the Virginia Company, 1622, *ibid.*, II, 44.
3. *Ibid.*, III, 242.
4. Captain Christopher Newport left Virginia, 22 June 1607 (Arber and Bradley, *Travels and Works of Captain John Smith*, I, lxx) and returned in the *John and Francis* the first part of January 1608 (*ibid.*, I, lxxxvi); in the second supply, third voyage to Virginia, Newport brought in the *Mary and Margaret*, Fall 1608, colonists, supplies, the first two white women, and presents for Powhatan (*ibid.*, 121, 122, 128, 129; Alexander Brown, *The Genesis of the United States*, 178, 200-204); shipwrecked on the Bermuda Islands with a company of 150 colonists who had sailed from England 1609 aboard the *Seaventure*, Newport with the others of the third supply reached Virginia 21 May 1610 in two pinnaces built on the islands (Purchas, *His Pilgrims*, XIX, 5-40); on his final trip, fifth voyage, bringing Sir Thomas Dale as Marshal of Virginia, Newport arrived at Algernoun Fort (Old Point), 12 May 1611 (see Dale's letter, Alexander Brown, *The Genesis of the United States*, 489-494).
5. Arber and Bradley, *Travels and Works of Captain John Smith*, II, 444.
6. *Dictionary of National Biography*, XL, 356; Purchas, *His Pilgrims*, IV, 180-213, 502.
7. See map, "Indian Tribes of Virginia," circa 1609, William Strachey, *The Historie of Travaile into Virginia Britannia*, op. 41.
8. For account of the "town of the Chesapeake," see "Sir Richard Grenville's Voyage to Virginia, 1585," Arber and Bradley, *Travels and Works of Captain John Smith*, 311, 312.
9. William Strachey, *The Historie of Travaile into Virginia Britannia* (reprint 1953), 44, 67, 68.
10. Strachey sailed in the third supply, 1609, aboard the *Seaventure* wrecked on the Bermuda Islands (Purchas, *His Pilgrims*, XIX, 1-41); he served as secretary of the Colony of Virginia, 1610 (Alexander Brown, *The Genesis of the United States*, 1024).
11. William Strachey, *The Historie of Travaile into Virginia Britannia*, 104, 105.

12. Account by George Percy, Arber and Bradley, *Travels and Works of Captain John Smith*, I, lxiii.
13. *William and Mary College Quarterly*, ser. 1, IX, 83.
14. Arber and Bradley, *Travels and Works of Captain John Smith*, II, 500.
15. List of land owners in Virginia 1625, Susan Myra Kingsbury, *Records of the Virginia Company of London*, IV, 556, 557; also patent to William Pierce 1619, Nell Marion Nugent, *Cavaliers and Pioneers*, 149.
16. Susan Myra Kingsbury, *Records of the Virginia Company of London*, III, 100, 101, 107; for land to be held "in free and common soccage," see Samuel M. Bemiss, *The Three Charters of the Virginia Company of London*, 11, 18.
17. Ante note 15; Rolfe's will in full, *Virginia Magazine of History and Biography*, LVIII, 58-65.
18. 1000 acres granted to Sir George Yeardley 10 January 1626 for his own use, adjacent to William Pierce and Captain Rogers Smith on Blunt Point (Warwick) River (H. R. McIlwaine, *Minutes of the Council and General Court of Colonial Virginia*, 130); after Yeardley's death, by 13 November 1627, his widow, about to remarry, disposed of his holdings. Lt. Thomas Flint repatented the land, 20 September 1628 (Nell Marion Nugent, *Cavaliers and Pioneers*, 9); boundaries are described as well as Yeardley's interest in the tract. Flint's sale of the land to John Brewer (H. R. McIlwaine, *Minutes of the Council and General Court of Colonial Virginia*, 180).
19. Robert Rich, prominent member of the Virginia Company; in the dissension which arose in the Company over control of the colony of Virginia, Rich sided with the Court party. The Virginia Company was dissolved and the Royal Government assumed authority in Virginia, 26 June 1624 (Alexander Brown, *Genesis of the United States*, 980-983).
20. Patent to Lt. Gilbert Peppett, 250 acres on Sly. side of Warwick River, 18 August 1627 (Nell Marion Nugent, *Cavaliers and Pioneers*, 7, 8).
21. Land owners 1625, ante, note 15.
22. See "Muster," Jester and Hiden, *Adventurers of Purse and Person*, 46, 205, 206.
23. Nell Marion Nugent, *Cavaliers and Pioneers*, 15, 25, 149.
24. Patent to Robert Poole, *ibid.*, 8.
25. F. W. Gookin, *The Life of Major General Daniel Gookin*, 31-40, 67, 70, 179, 180.
26. For "broadslides," see Susan Myra Kingsbury, *Records of the Virginia Company of London*, III, 239-241; Capt. Thos. Neuce, deputy for

Company's land (at Kecoughtan), and Capt. William Neuce, named Marshal. Capt. Thos. Neuce and wife were in Virginia by 1620 (*ibid.*, 375, 457) and William Neuce was due to depart for Virginia in the summer of 1621 (*ibid.*, 472), but appears *not* to have reached Virginia until October 1623 (*ibid.*, IV, 22) where he died shortly thereafter (*ibid.*, 16).

27. *Ibid.*, I, 446, 447, 482; also see "Muster," Jester and Hiden, *Adventurers of Purse and Person*, 48.
28. Susan Myra Kingsbury, *Records of the Virginia Company of London*, II, 383; III, 612.
29. *Ibid.*, IV, 105, 116.
30. *William and Mary College Quarterly*, ser. 2, XIV, 204; E.D. Neill, *Virginia Carolorum*, 83, 94, 178.
31. Susan Myra Kingsbury, *Records of the Virginia Company of London*, III, 103-109.
32. Elizabeth, daughter of Daniel Gookin, Jr., became the second wife of Col. Edmund Quincy of Braintree, Mass. For issue, see James Savage, *Genealogical Dictionary of New England*, III, 500.
33. Date of conveyance unknown; however, the land was found to escheat, 1684, and was granted to Col. William Cole and Capt. Robert Jones. The latter sold his interest to Cole, who in 1685 had recorded his patent for 1,431 acres, of which 1,217 lay in Warwick and 216 [obvious error in computing acreage] in Elizabeth City County, "commonly called Newport's News, according to the most ancient and lawful bounds upon an exact survey of the 2500 acres formerly granted to Daniel Gookin, Esq., except 250 acres formerly conveyed and made over to said Gookin." *William and Mary College Quarterly*, ser. 2, XIV, 204.

3

Local Government

The Corporations

BY 1617, plantations in the Colony of Virginia had spread along the banks of the James River and its estuaries. In consequence, administration of government altogether from Jamestown became burdensome. To facilitate justice, the Council serving under Governor Samuel Argall ordered established four great divisions, designated corporations¹ as follows: James City, Charles City, Henrico and Kecoughtan (Kikotan, in 1619 Elizabeth City, in honor of Elizabeth, Queen of Bohemia and daughter of King James I).

Kecoughtan, in which the area now Newport News fell, included the former Indian territory between the James and the York Rivers and reached as far north as Skiffe's (Keith's) Creek and the New Poquoson (now Poquoson) River. This Corporation also embraced the territory on the south side of the present Hampton Roads to the ocean and reached to the Nansemond River.² Thus, the whole of the present city of Norfolk was embraced in Elizabeth City Corporation.

When the first representative legislative assembly convened at Jamestown, 30 July 1619, two representatives from Kecoughtan were among the Burgesses. They were Captain William Tucker, whose land lay adjoining the present Small Boat Harbor, then known as Captain Tucker's Creek, and William Capps.³ To administer justice the better in "remote parts," the Assembly which convened at Jamestown in March 1624 authorized the holding of monthly courts in two of the Corporations, Elizabeth City and Charles City, for "deciding suits and controversies not exceeding the value of one hundred pounds of tobacco and for punishing petty offences."⁴ This Assembly also provided for a judicial body of commissioners to be appointed by the Governor and the Council and to be headed by the Commander of the Corporation.

Commissioners for Elizabeth City named in the Acts of the 1629 Assembly were, as follows: Captain Thomas Purefoy, Commander; Captain Edward Waters, second in command; Lieutenant Thomas Willoughby, Lieutenant George Thompson, Mr. Adam Thoroughgood, Mr. Lyonell Coulson, Mr. William Kempe and Mr. John Downman.⁵ These commissioners had been selected from all parts of the extensive Corporation.

A list of members of the House of Burgesses for 1629 shows an increase in representation for the Warwick area, the population of which was rapidly expanding. Thomas Harwood and Pettiplace Claus had been chosen to represent Mulberry Island; Warwick River was represented by Christopher Stokes, Thomas Ceeley, Thomas Flint and Zachariah Cripps, while Nutmeg Quarter (area of the present Mariners Museum) had William Cole and William Bentley.⁶

The arrangement for local administration of justice served Elizabeth City Corporation until 1631 when the growing Warwick River area justified the establishment of a monthly court there. Accordingly, the following commissioners were named: Captain Samuel Mathews, Captain Richard Stephens, Captain Thomas Flint, John Brewer, Zachariah Cripps and Thomas Ceeley.⁷

Warwick River Shire, 1634

Even the establishment of additional courts, however, did not adequately serve the growing colony; thus in 1634, for "purposes of more convenient government," the colony was divided into eight shires "to be governed as the shires in England."⁸ Warwick River, named one of these eight original shires, embraced a strip of land along the north bank of the James River. Warwick River was the smallest of these eight shires and, unlike the others, had no land for division in later years.

Warwick County, 1643

At a meeting of the Assembly, March 1642/43, an act authorized that Warwick River Shire should thereafter be called the County of Warwick and set the bounds of the county as follows: "From the mouth of Keith's [Skiffe's] Creek up along the lower side of the head of it, including all the dividend of Mr. Thomas Harwood . . . with Mulberry Island, Stanley Hundred, Warwick River, with all the land belonging to the Mills and so on down to Newport's News with the families of Skowen's [Scone's] Damms [Scone's Dam road is to be south of the Briarfield Road] and Persimmon Ponds [Persimmon Ponds were in the vicinity of Harpersville]." ⁹

County Commissioners

The Commissioners for the county were chosen as before by the Governor with approval of the Council and were appointed for life. Removal of a Commissioner for absence or other reason was only upon authority of the Governor. William Roscow, Commissioner for Warwick was removed, 1696, because he refused to obey an order of the Council.¹⁰ This system prevailed except for a brief period during the regime of the Commonwealth government in Virginia when the House of Burgesses assumed authority for confirming the County Commissioners.¹¹

Extant Warwick County records list the following among the Commissioners in 1647: Thomas Bernard, Zachariah Cripps, William Whitby and Thomas Filmore.¹² In 1649 the following Commissioners were listed as sitting at the monthly court: Thomas Harwood, William Whitby, Thomas Bernard, Zachariah Cripps, Thomas Taylor and Thomas Daniels.¹³

These Commissioners invariably were selected from among the prominent and influential planters in the respective counties.¹⁴ The control of the families was further tightened by act of the Assembly in 1653, reaffirmed in 1655,¹⁵ when provision was made that the selection of any new commissioner was to be by

the Governor, *only* from recommendations of the sitting commissioners.¹⁶ Thus, it is evident that county government was in the hands of a closely knit body, a self-perpetuating board, so to speak.

At a court held for Warwick, 20 January 1690/91, those present were: the Honorable William Cole, then Secretary of the Colony of Virginia; Humphrey Harwood, Samuel Ranshaw, Captain Richard Whitaker, Thomas Merry, William Cary, Captain Miles Cary and Emanuel Wills.¹⁷

The Court House Elm

For the major portion of the seventeenth century there was no court house in Warwick where the commissioners might sit. For their monthly meetings they were accustomed to assemble at the home of one or another of the commissioners. A few extant records of Warwick show that this was generally the practice.¹⁸ Court was held at the home of Captain Samuel Mathews (Denbigh), 23 June 1647. Miles Cary II (abt. 1655-1709), who lived at Richneck,¹⁹ frequently entertained the court at his home and the clerk's office was long maintained there.²⁰ In summer the commissioners are said to have gathered under the shade of a huge elm tree to carry on county business.²¹ The spreading tree still standing and known as the Court House elm is represented on the official seal adopted for the city of Newport News, July 1958.

Clerks of Courts

Court Clerks were first appointed by the Governor, 1642, but later were designated by the Secretary of the Colony of Virginia.²² They were selected from among families of conspicuous influence in their locales. Six members of the Cary family served successively as Clerks of Court of Warwick during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. The most original feature of the county court was the fact that it constituted a court of record for all kinds of land conveyances.²³ This was a

radical innovation at variance with the prevailing English custom which regarded land titles as private documents which were preserved as such by respective owners and were not open to the public. In addition, the Virginia system of land patents certainly instituted as early as 1619, provided a wealth of information regarding land ownership in Warwick, notwithstanding the irreparable loss of most of the Warwick County Court records.²⁴

Warwicktown

In an effort to draw the population of Virginia together, rather than have the people dispersed in widely separated plantations, the Assembly in 1680 ordered that land in certain localities be laid out for the creation of towns. Accordingly, a site was chosen in Warwick County with the designation of fifty acres on "Mr. Mathews' land,"²⁵ on the bluff overlooking the mouth of the Warwick River and Deep Creek. The acreage was laid out in lots and some time before 1690 a court house and jail had been erected there, for the records reveal that both buildings were ordered repaired that year.²⁶ Here at Town Point, often called Warwicktown, the site of an embryo municipality, a public warehouse was built for storage and inspection of tobacco prior to shipment. It was in use in 1750 when William Dudley is recorded as inspector.²⁷ Notwithstanding the ambitious intent of the solons, the town languished though it continued in existence as such until 1809 when the Assembly, upon petition, authorized the removal of the county seat to a more convenient location on Stoney Run, on a tract then owned by the Cary family known as the Court House tract. The land was donated to the county by Richard Cary, Jr., as promised, as soon as he came of age. The site of the town, purchased by Richard Young, then reverted to acreage.²⁸ In 1810 a small brick building to serve as a court house and a clerk's office and a jail were erected on the new site. These buildings are described

in a letter written by a Union soldier who camped there in 1862.²⁹

Warwick Court House

Although in 1887, Newport News is listed as a voting precinct of Warwick County,³⁰ the seat of county government had been moved there by 1888, when the industrial development of the area made it a more convenient center.³¹ When Newport News was incorporated as a city, 1896, the county seat was returned to the Stoney Run area, generally known as Warwick Court House. The Warwick seat of government then remained there until 1945, when in the county there was instituted the county manager form of government to function under the Board of Supervisors. At that time, for purposes of more convenient administration, the seat of Warwick government was moved to a site on Main Street in Hilton Village; however, the court house and clerk's office at Warwick Court House continued in use until consolidation, 1 July 1958.

Vote by Freeholders Only

As noted heretofore, colonial officials in Warwick for the most part, with the exception of the Burgesses, held their offices by virtue of appointment. The post-Revolutionary War period, however, brought a change in a more democratic system when county officials were selected in duly authorized elections in which the freeholders (landowners) were permitted to cast the ballots.³² The elections were open affairs, each voter calling out by voice his choice of a candidate. The method often led to bitter feelings and the vote not infrequently was contested. In 1821 the election of William Jones to the Virginia House of Delegates was contested in Warwick by Miles Cary, the unsuccessful candidate. Depositions to prove ownership of land and accordingly the right to vote, were duly recorded after the right of sixteen persons to vote had been challenged.³³



COURTESY, THE MARINERS MUSEUM

Warwick County Court House, 1862, from a contemporary sketch by Sergeant Peterman.



COURTESY, NEWPORT NEWS PUBLIC LIBRARY

Warwick County Court House, officially moved to Newport News, 1888, building completed 1892, served the county until 1896, and the city of Newport News from 1896 to 1948.

NOTES

1. Susan Myra Kingsbury, *Records of the Virginia Company of London*, III, 100, 276.
2. In 1634 when the colony was divided into eight shires, Elizabeth City Corporation became one of the shires while yielding territory north of the Old Poquoson (Northwest Branch of Back River) to the shire of Charles River (York), and also the area along the north bank of the James River which was designated Warwick River Shire (*post*, note 8). In 1636, the territory of Elizabeth City on the south side of the present Hampton Roads was cut off and designated New Norfolk County. In 1637, New Norfolk was divided into Upper Norfolk County and Lower Norfolk County. Upper Norfolk became Nansemond County in 1642. Then, in 1691, Lower Norfolk was divided into Norfolk County and Princess Anne County (Morgan Poitiaux Robinson, *Bulletin No. 9*, Virginia State Library, entitled *Virginia Counties*, 85, 256-258); also W. W. Hening, *Statutes at Large*, III, 95.
3. Susan Myra Kingsbury, *Records of the Virginia Company of London*, III, 154; commission, 16 July 1622, to Capt. Wm. Tucker to command "from Newport's News to the west side of Southampton River . . ." (*ibid.*, 664); Tucker's patent for 150 acres, see Nell Marion Nugent, *Cavaliers and Pioneers*, 5.
4. William Waller Hening, *Statutes at Large, being a Collection of all the Laws of Virginia from the First Session of the Legislature in the year 1619* (1823 edition), I, 125 (hereafter, W. W. Hening, *Statutes at Large*).
5. *Ibid.*, 133.
6. *Ibid.*, 139; in 1660 the number of Burgesses was limited to two from each county (*ibid.*, xix).
7. *Ibid.*, 169, 187.
8. *Ibid.*, 224; the eight shires were: Accawmack, Elizabeth City, Warwick River (Warwick, 1643), Warrosquyoake (Isle of Wight, 1637), James City, Charles City, Charles River (York, 1643), Henrico.
9. *Ibid.*, 249, 250.
10. Philip Alexander Bruce, *Institutional History of Virginia in the Seventeenth Century*, I, 506.
11. W. W. Hening, *Statutes at Large*, I, 372, 376.
12. Loose papers of Warwick County (Archives, Virginia State Library, Richmond, Va.), fragmentary, antedating the Civil War in the original or photostats; see "Warwick County Court Records," Chapter 10.

13. Loose papers of Warwick County.
14. Philip Alexander Bruce, *Institutional History of Virginia in the Seventeenth Century*, I, 488, 493; also W. W. Hening, *Statutes at Large*, I, 376.
15. *Ibid.*, I, 376, 402.
16. *Ibid.*, 402.
17. Loose papers Warwick County (Archives, Virginia State Library).
18. *Ibid.*; court held in Warwick on 21st of month, bi-monthly after 1642; by act of the Assembly, March 1662, county commissioners were designated justices of the peace, as they had authority of these officers originally; justices of county courts consisted of eight "of the most able, honest and judicious persons of the county" (four constituted a quorum). W. W. Hening, *Statutes at Large* (1823), I, 273; II, 69, 70.
19. Fairfax Harrison, *The Virginia Carys*, 100.
20. There was no court house in Warwick County until after 1680 when it was located at Warwicktown (Town Point) at Deep Creek and the Warwick River. Notes 25 and 26, *post*.
21. Traditional.
22. Fees set for clerks of court. W. W. Hening, *Statutes at Large*, I, 266; appointment by Governor, *ibid.*, 305.
23. Philip Alexander Bruce, *Institutional History of Virginia in the Seventeenth Century*, I, 548, 549.
24. *Ibid.*; also, see abstracts of Warwick County land patents (Archives, Virginia State Library)
25. W. W. Hening, *Statutes at Large* (1823), II, 471, 472.
26. The act for creation of towns was suspended 1681 (*ibid.*, 508), and renewed 1691 (*ibid.*, III, 60), noting that at "Warwick Town" were "several houses there built together with a brick court house and prison"; also loose papers Warwick County Court Orders 1690-91 (Archives, Virginia State Library).
27. Court Order Book, Warwick County, 1748-1762, p. 68.
28. See Warwick County petitions (original) which set forth in full the controversy over removal. Petitions on both sides were filed and contain lists of names, also Young's petition, 7 December 1813, for return of land to acreage (Archives, Virginia State Library).
29. See Chapter 10, note 36, *post*.
30. Act providing for fence law; see John W. Williams, *Index to Enrolled Bills (General Assembly) 1776-1910*, p. 233.
31. *Ibid.*, 916, act authorizing vote on removal of Court House, 1887-88; also, see Chapter 14, "Court House."

32. In the colonial period freeholders chose the Burgesses, while county officers were appointed; election authorized for Kecoughtan and Newport's News, 26 January 1624 (Susan Myra Kingsbury, *Records of the Virginia Company of London*, IV, 448, 449).
33. Warwick County petitions (Archives, Virginia State Library); also, John Jones contests election of Dixon Brown to office of Sheriff, setting forth that he (Jones) received majority of *legal* votes; names of voters listed (*ibid.*).

Plantations

The Lure of the Land

As heretofore noted, the Englishmen who came to tidewater Virginia to establish themselves were averse to gathering in limited areas. Even legislation enacted to encourage urban living was ineffective in Warwick County.

The prospect of acquiring landed estates was the lure which had drawn many settlers to Virginia. The immigrant of modest means took up his fifty acres and gradually acquired more land, while the affluent Englishmen were able to patent acres by the hundreds and chose them along the open waterways.¹

In 1623 a communication to the Council of the Virginia Company in England reported that the plantations of Newport's News and Blunt Point were "very fruitful and pleasant seats, free from salt marshes, very healthful and upon high land."² In view of this fine report, it is not surprising that the entire Newport's News-Warwick area was taken up in land patents shortly after the grants became available to those adventuring to Virginia.

Moreover, the Newport's News-Warwick area, close to Jamestown, had assets besides the banks of the broad James River and the more sheltered harbor afforded by the Warwick River. Interlacing the land were small streams making inland,³ which, at the mouths, provided safe anchorage for skiffs, shallops and small sloops. In addition, these creeks were potential water power for mills.

Water Mills

On the upper reaches of the Warwick River was located in the seventeenth century a mill operated by the owners of Denbigh⁴ into the twentieth century and well known as Young's mill. On Waters Creek, adjacent to the present route sixty, a

mill was in operation, and leased to James Cathorn, 1683.⁵ Through a succession of owners this mill, rebuilt several times, continued to grind by water power into the twentieth century, when it was known as Causey's Mill. The restored mill, no longer in operation, is now within the park of the Mariners Museum. Just over the York County line at the headwaters of the New Poquoson (Poquoson) River, there was also a seventeenth-century dam and mill, still known as Harwood's mill and now an important unit in the Newport News waterworks system supplying the Peninsula. About 1700, the mill was operated by Mathew Jones whose son lived at Bourbon on Mulberry Island. On Salter's Creek in the seventeenth century a tidal mill was installed, the rising and falling of the tide providing the means by which power was generated to turn the mill wheel. Just prior to the Revolutionary War, this mill was in operation under the ownership of William Armistead.⁷

The Bounty of the Waterways

1956180

The plantations, both large and small became self-sufficient units for daily living. Not only did the land produce what was needed but the adjacent waters abounded, and still abound, in seafood of all kinds, and have afforded throughout the centuries an auxiliary means of livelihood for the inhabitants of the area. Just off Blunt Point in the middle of the James River are the finest natural seed oyster rocks in the world. Still highly productive, they continue to provide a living for hundreds of watermen who tong there in season, using the nearby adjacent harbors of Deep Creek and the Warwick River to moor their craft during off hours, as they did in the colonial period.

These oyster rocks had been selected in 1622 as a site for a blockhouse to guard the James River beyond, and prevent the passage of any unapproved ship beyond the point. Captain Each, master of the *Abigaile*, offered to the Virginia Company in London to bring twelve carpenters to Virginia, who, with the assistance of his crew and some colonists, would erect the block-

house at a cost of 60,000 wt. of tobacco.⁸ For some reason, not known, the project never materialized; however, a comparable defensive post was subsequently erected on the main land.

Warwick River Area, the County Center

By the time Warwick River shire was created, 1634, the Mulberry Island-Denbigh-Blunt Point area, fully settled, was the center of activity. Here, from the early seventeenth century until after the Civil War, the religious, political and commercial life of the county was concentrated. Here, particularly during the colonial period some of the most influential men of the colony dwelt with their families, or practiced their professions. Among them were: Governor Samuel Mathews; Colonel William Cole; Colonel Miles Cary, Sr., and his four sons, Miles, Jr., Thomas, Henry and William; Thomas Harwood; Cole Digges, the latter grandson of Governor Edward Digges and himself a member of the Council of State.⁹ George Wythe, a native of Elizabeth City County, and later to be recognized as the most learned jurist of his times, a professor at the College of William and Mary and teacher of Thomas Jefferson, James Monroe and John Marshall, was admitted to practice law in the Warwick Court, 2 March 1748.¹⁰ He was then twenty-two years old.

Denbigh

Denbigh, best known of the Warwick plantations and so named by 1629, was the seat of Captain Mathews, who in 1626 is recorded as having taken up land in the Blunt Point area, calling his plantation Mathews' Manor.¹¹ Shortly, he married the widow of the affluent cape merchant Abraham Peirse^y¹² and was recognized as one of the wealthiest men in the colony. In 1643 a brochure circulated in England to encourage migration to Virginia described his home as a comfortable one and his plantation as a miniature village, surrounded by fields where were grown flax, hemp and wheat. Cattle and swine were

raised to supply ships on outbound voyages. Hides were tanned and eight shoemakers employed in a cobbler's shop. In addition, there was a weaving house where the flax was spun and woven into cloth.¹³

Mathews, a member of the Council served as Governor of Virginia 1657-1660. Sometime after his death, Denbigh was acquired from his son by the Digges family, who maintained ownership until 1787 when Richard Young acquired a portion of the tract, and finally, by 1813, title to the entire plantation.¹⁴ A portion of the Denbigh plantation is now the Newport News city farm.

Bolthroe

Bolthroe, lying on the Warwick River, above Denbigh on the north, was originally a tract of 500 acres patented about 1626 by Richard Stevens,¹⁵ who had married the daughter of Abraham Peirse, the cape merchant. Stevens was principal in the first duel fought, 1624, in the English colonies, and fatally wounded his antagonist Lieutenant George Harrison, on their dueling grounds at Dancing Point in the area now Charles City County.¹⁶

By 1637 Captain Samuel Stevens had inherited Bolthroe from his father. He married Frances Culpeper, who, with her second husband, Governor Sir William Berkeley, sold Bolthroe, 1671, to William Cole, a member of the Council of State.¹⁷ The plantation remained the seat of the Cole family until 1766 when it was advertised for sale.¹⁸ In 1685, William Cole had acquired title to 1433 acres of the Gookin tract known as the Newport's News plantation.¹⁹ His grandson Cole Digges, also grandson of Governor Edward Digges, inherited from the two families Denbigh, Bolthroe and the Newport's News plantation.²⁰

Windmill Point

Windmill Point, lying on the Warwick River and Potash (Lucas) Creek, had been acquired by Thomas Taylor, a mar-

iner, and is recorded in a land patent in 1643.²¹ Taylor served as one of the Commissioners of Warwick County, 1647. At his death the land, together with an adjacent tract called Magpie Swamp, was bequeathed to his son-in-law, Colonel Miles Cary, Sr.,²² the progenitor of a large family, influential in the county for two centuries.

Richneck

In addition to the land holdings of his father-in-law, Cary acquired a tract, the original portion of which was patented by Zachariah Cripps, 1628.²³ This, known as The Forest, adjoined the Taylor holdings. At his death in 1667, Miles Cary I bequeathed his land to his sons. Windmill Point and Magpie Swamp fell to Thomas Cary. To Henry Cary and Miles Cary, Jr., their father devised The Forest tract. Miles Jr. took the portion lying between the forks of Stoney Run and called it Richneck. There he built his home and there the Warwick Court was frequently held and there also until about 1793 was maintained the Clerk's office presided over by six members of the Cary family in succession.²⁴ There, still stands the Court House elm which now shelters the restored tomb of Miles Cary, Jr.

The Forest

The Forest remained the seat of Henry Cary, who was a building contractor. Among the public buildings erected by him in Williamsburg were the Capitol, the Governor's Palace and the main building at the College of William and Mary after the fire in 1705.²⁵

Peartree Hall

At Peartree Hall dwelt a third and fourth generation of the Cary family, both named Miles. The Peartree Hall dwelling stood on the bluff overlooking Potash (Lucas) Creek, about a mile above Windmill Point. Judge Richard Cary was the last of the family to live there, as the house was destroyed by fire in



The Peninsula between the James and York Rivers, and surrounding areas, showing historic locations. Within the darker shaded area is the present city of Newport News.

the early 1800's. The Judge maintained at Peartree Hall "the finest botannical gardens in America," according to the horticulturist William Tatham, who so stated in a letter written in 1796.²⁶

Persimmon Ponds

Persimmon Ponds at the juncture of the road from Morrison to Yorktown with the road from Oyster Point to Harpersville, was the home of Miles Cary IV, who operated nearby a mercantile establishment.²⁷ This location is identified in the act of the Assembly, 1643, setting the boundary lines of Warwick County.²⁸

Ceeley's

Ceeley's, overlooking Hampton Roads and lying just east of Salter's Creek, was patented originally by Abraham Bush in 1624 and a portion of the tract subsequently was sold to Thomas Ceeley. About 1691, two hundred and fifty acres of the tract were conveyed to Major William Wilson, a successful merchant.²⁹ Eventually, Wilson acquired the surrounding 2000 acres of which Ceeley's was the center. He built there in 1705 his residence of two stories with wings, where he assembled a noteworthy library and a collection of silver, in general use for extensive entertaining. Through a Wilson-Cary marriage, Ceeley's became another seat of the well-known Cary family.³⁰ The wills of Miles Cary and Wilson Cary, both of Ceeley's, are of record in the clerk's office at Hampton,³¹ since that portion of Newport News remained in Elizabeth City County until the early part of the twentieth century. During the tenure of Thomas Ceeley there is said to have been established at Ceeley's experimental gardens for determining the plants best suited to the soil in the area.

*Bourbon*³²

Bourbon, one of the very few early colonial homes of brick still standing is located on Mulberry Island (Fort Eustis) and

was used during World Wars I and II as quarters for officers. The date 1727 found upon a brick is said to mark the year of construction. Mathew Jones II is credited with having built the house. He was the son of the first Mathew Jones, who operated a water mill at the head of the New Poquoson River, York County (Harwood's Mill), now a part of the Newport News Waterworks system. During the Revolutionary War Bourbon was the home of Allen Jones.

Blunt Point

The Blunt Point plantation, to the site of which the present Blunt Point road leads from Hiden Boulevard, was the seventeenth-century home of William Roscow, Commissioner of Warwick County, who was removed by the Governor 1696 because he deliberately failed to carry out the policies of the Council of State.³³ Both he and his wife Mary Wilson, who died 1741, daughter of Colonel William Wilson of Elizabeth City County, are buried in a former garden plot not far distant from the site of the Roscow home.³⁴ The inscription on the slabs are worn and scarcely legible now.

The Roscow home of substantial brick construction, the crumbling remains of which were visible as late as 1930, stood on the high bluff overlooking the James River. There was a bricked-in passage leading from the basement of the house to a ravine not far distant. Whether this was intended for a drain or whether it was a means of access to the house from the beach to which the ravine led is not known.³⁵ A passage way of this type, while not usual was neither a rarity in the seventeenth century. Roscow also owned land called Derby's on the east side of Waters Creek. His grandson James Roscow petitioned the Assembly 1768 to dock the Roscow entail and permit the sale of Derby's.³⁶

Hilton

Hilton, a farm acquired by John Pembroke Jones before the Civil War, originally was named Milford. The two and a half

story brick house standing on the bluff overlooking the James River in the area of the present Brandon Heights, was shelled by Federal gunboats during the Civil War. Jones' wife, who was from North Carolina, is credited with renaming the estate Hilton for her home associations.³⁷ Prior to World War I the tract was forested in a heavy growth of tall pines which extended on both sides of the Warwick road from the railroad tracks almost to the James River. The entire Hilton tract was purchased from later owners and the village built by the United States Shipping Board Emergency Fleet Corporation as a housing project for shipyard war workers.³⁸ It was formally opened for occupancy, 7 July 1918.

*Lee Hall*³⁹

Lee Hall, the pre-Civil War home place of Richard Decatur Lee, was built, 1848-59. The substantial house of solid brick walls of two stories and an English basement, stands on a knoll in the middle of a grove of huge oak trees, not far distant from the upper reaches of Skiffe's Creek, the latter now also a part of the Newport News Reservoir system. Lee is said to have financed the building of his home from the proceeds of a sale of a bumper crop of tobacco for \$10,000. An earlier colonial home on the site had been burned.

The Lee Hall tract originally was part of the Oak Hall tract of some 3000 acres. Merrie Oaks, included in the overall estate, was partitioned off some time before Lee built his home, and was acquired later by the Old Dominion Land Company as part of the watershed for the Lee Hall Reservoir serving Newport News in the early days. It is now part of the Newport News waterworks system.⁴⁰

Upon the completion of the new house at Oak Grove, a house-warming for neighbors from all adjacent counties was held, at which time the place was renamed Lee Hall.

*Cedar Grove*⁴¹

Cedar Grove, adjacent to Waters Creek, known in the early nineteenth century as Shelly Hill, then embraced a tract extending for approximately a half mile or more along the James River and reached to a line approximately at the present Chesapeake and Ohio Railway tracks on the east. In 1853 or 1854, the tract of land was acquired by Captain J. N. Maffit of the United States Navy, who during the Civil War commanded the *Florida* of the Confederate Navy. During Maffit's ownership the estate was renamed "Carrieville" in honor of Mrs. Maffit.

Shelly Hill was purchased, 1857, by a British mariner, Captain Nelson Smith, upon his retirement from sea life. A part of the sale agreement required that the Negro slaves be purchased with the tract, for Captain Maffit said he would not dislodge them from their home.

The story and a half house of sixteen rooms, built by Maffit, originally included a wing. The house proper was encircled by a gallery on the lower floor. The wing having been removed, the house was remodeled in the late 1920's, giving the appearance of a colonial structure.

When the plan for the Mariners Museum was developed, 1930, sixty acres of the Cedar Grove tract were acquired for inclusion in the park. A dam was built across the mouth of Waters Creek and the waterway renamed Lake Maury.

Owing to the loss of the court records of Warwick County prior to the Civil War, successive early ownership of the Cedar Grove and adjacent land is difficult to trace. Lands upon Waters Creek, now Lake Maury were among the early grants recorded in the Virginia land patents. Lieutenant Edward Waters, from whom the creek got its name, was among the shipwrecked passengers aboard the *Seaventure*, 1609, who spent nine months on the Bermuda Islands prior to reaching Virginia, 1610. He and his wife Grace (O'Neill) were captured in a

raid by the Nansemond Indians in the massacre of 1622 and carried across the James River, whence they made their escape. Thus, it would seem they were living on Waters Creek at the time, particularly as Waters' patent there for 100 acres is of record in 1624.⁴² Others who owned land in the area were: Percival Ibbison, 1624; Thomas Davis, 1645; William Whitby, 1652, and Captain John Langhorne, 1675.⁴³

Cedar Grove has an interesting history centering around the Civil War and particularly the period which the Newport News-Warwick area was invaded by Federal forces under General McClellan. This is recounted in part hereafter.

*End View*⁴⁴

End View, located about a half mile beyond Lee Hall on the road leading to Yorktown, has been the property of the Curtis family for several generations. It was originally a plantation of the Harwood family, with whom the Curtis' were intermarried.⁴⁵

End View was in the path of military operations during the Revolutionary War, the War of 1811 and the Civil War. The original frame house with chimneys laid in English bond, still standing, is said by archæological authorities to have been built prior to 1720. Although, since reconditioned, much of the original structure still remains.

An ever-flowing spring at End View refreshed General Washington's troops as they rested there on the march to Yorktown to give battle to the British under General Cornwallis.

Merry Point

The plantation at Merry Point, where the home of William Parker stood, is of record in 1628, when, following the grounding of a boat on the shoals offshore, a quarrel ensued between Thomas Godby and William Bentley. Godby died the following day as the result of injuries received in a scuffle and Bentley was brought to trial.⁴⁶

Merry Point is not to be confused with Marie's Mount, the latter the Gookin plantation overlooking the harbor at Newport's News, and hitherto mentioned.

Entailed Lands

By 1710 the large plantations and acreage acquired in the thousands began to be something of a burden to their owners. These estates, often in separate localities, yet for the most part, entailed according to the English custom, could not be sold except by legislative enactment. Acts docking entails and thus permitting owners to sell and invest proceeds otherwise, were the initial recourse by which large plantations were broken up. The entail on The Forest was authorized docked in 1730;⁴⁷ the Roscow entail on Derby in Warwick County was docked, as heretofore noted, in 1768;⁴⁸ William Digges of Warwick, grandson of Cole Digges, petitioned in 1774 for permission to divest himself of ownership of 2,644 acres in Caroline County,⁴⁹ and Wilson Miles Cary petitioned the same year for the privilege of holding certain lands in fee simple so that he might offer them for sale.⁵⁰

Then, after the Revolutionary War, legislative enactment banned the entailing of lands and thus large estates could be more readily broken up.⁵¹ An account of the division of some of the lands in Warwick is given hereafter.

N O T E S

1. *Ante*, Chapter 2, note 16; also see Abstracts, Warwick County land patents (Archives, Virginia State Library).
2. Susan Myra Kingsbury, *Records of the Virginia Company of London*, II, 381.
3. Capt. Tucker's Creek, later known as Newport's News Creek, now dredged to form the Municipal Small Boat Harbor; an outlet for Newmarket Creek was at the foot of the present James River bridge;

Waters Creek, now Lake Maury; Deep Creek; Warwick River, Stoney Run; Potash (Lucas) Creek.

4. Successive owners of Denbigh were the Mathews, Digges and Young families. Descendants of the latter still own a portion of the original plantation acquired by Richard Young prior to 1809.
5. See mention of Waters Creek mill dam in patent to Henry Price, 1681 (Abstract, Warwick County land patents, Book 7, p. 104, Archives, Virginia State Library); also James Cathorn's patent for 53 acres "on mill run of Waters creek," 29 October 1696 (*ibid.*, Book 9, p. 44); Cathorn's will, 4 June 1696, pr. 1697 names sons, William, John and James (loose papers Warwick County, Archives, Virginia State Library).
6. *Post*, note 32.
7. *Calendar of Virginia State Papers, 1652-1781*, I, 562; account of Dundas' raid notes passing Armistead's mill.
8. Susan Myra Kingsbury, *Records of the Virginia Company of London*, III, 647, 685.
9. For account of these families, see Jester and Hiden, *Adventurers of Purse and Person*, 141, 154, 205, 244, 326.
10. Warwick County Court Order Book 1748-1762, p. 7; Geo. Wythe, attorney for Angelica Wills, *ibid.*, 29, attorney for John Brown, *ibid.*, 30.
11. H. R. McIlwaine, *Minutes of the Council and General Court of Colonial Virginia*, 83, 124, 135.
12. Peirse came to Virginia, 1616, in the first magazine (general cargo) ship *George*. His widow was Frances (Greville) West, whose first husband was Nathaniel West, son of Lord De La Warr (Jester and Hiden, *Adventurers of Purse and Person*, 265).
13. E. D. Neill, *Virginia Carolorum*, 111, 112, 204.
14. *Ante*, Chapter 3, note 28, *re*: removal of Court House, 1807-1810; Richard Young recites he owns portions of Denbigh, has acquired site of Warwick Town and requests in petition, 1813, land revert to acreage.
15. See repatent issued to Mrs. Elizabeth Stevens, 23 September 1637 (Nell Marion Nugent, *Cavaliers and Pioneers*, 72).
16. E. D. Neill, *Virginia Carolorum*, 88.
17. W. W. Hening, *Statutes at Large*, II, 321-325.
18. "A tract of about 1500 acres in Warwick Co. adjoining Richneck known by the name of Baldriff Neck [Bolthrope]"; *William and Mary College Quarterly*, ser. 1, V, 177, *et seq.*

19. *Ante*, Chapter 2, note 33.
20. Jester and Hiden, *Adventurers of Purse and Person*, 157, 158.
21. Nell Marion Nugent, *Cavaliers and Pioneers*, 4 (Bainham patent).
22. Miles Cary, Sr., married Anne Taylor; since wives could not hold title to property, ownership was vested in their husbands; for repatent of land by Cary, *ibid.*, 374.
23. For Cripps' patents, see Nell Marion Nugent, *Cavaliers and Pioneers*, 13, 72; repatent by Cary, *ibid.*, 533.
24. This information contained in a letter dated 13 February 1933 from Fairfax Harrison to E. G. Swem, librarian of the College of William and Mary; the letter transmitting for deposit at the College photostats of original Warwick County records located at Wilkes-Barre, Pennsylvania, also notes the signature of William Bolton, Clerk of Courts of Warwick County, 1675; also, see Fairfax Harrison, *Virginia Carys*, 49; Miles Cary, Jr., member of House of Burgesses, from Warwick, Clerk of Virginia Court of Claims, given leave, 1701, to attend court in Warwick, at which he was also Clerk (*Calendar of Virginia State Papers*, 1652-1781, p. 402, sec. 631).
25. *William and Mary College Quarterly*, ser. 1, X, 79-81; W. W. Hening, *Statutes at Large*, III, 485; also, see patent issued to Henry Cary, 23 April 1681, for 670 acres "commonly called The Forest" (Abstracts, Warwick County land patents, Book 7, p. 87, Archives, Virginia State Library).
26. Fairfax Harrison, *The Virginia Carys*, 49-56; Tatham letter, see *Journal of American Historical Society*, IV, 575.
27. Fairfax Harrison, *The Virginia Carys*, 51.
28. W. W. Hening, *Statutes at Large*, I, 250.
29. The fragment of an undated deed recorded in Elizabeth City County, Deed Book 1689-1699, p. 90, recites Ceeley ownership of the land.
30. Fairfax Harrison, *The Virginia Carys*, 97, 98; the Ceeley plate, *ibid.*, op. 105.
31. Blanche Adams Chapman, *Wills and Administrations of Elizabeth City County, Virginia, 1610-1800*, pp. 116, 117.
32. *Tyler's Quarterly Historical and Genealogical Magazine*, VI, 47, 146; information also from the Quartermaster at Fort Eustis, 1927.
33. Philip Alexander Bruce, *Institutional History of Virginia in the Seventeenth Century*, I, 506.
34. Warwick County tombstone inscriptions, see *William and Mary College Quarterly*, ser. 1, XIV, 163-167.
35. The writer explored the site in 1928, talked with the owner, a farmer

and waterman named Wilbern and wrote an account from which this excerpt is taken.

36. W. W. Hening, *Statutes at Large*, VIII, 301.
37. Information supplied by a late member of the Pembroke Jones family.
38. See Chapter 17, "Hilton Village."
39. From an account, February 1926, by the late Mrs. Henry Wise Booker (Frances Lee) of Hampton, kinswoman of Richard Decauter Lee; see deed of trust, R. D. Lee and Martha, his wife on 2000 acres, 18 September 1866 (Warwick County Deed Book No. 1, pp. 46, 47, Clerk of Courts No. 1, Newport News); plat showing division of Lee land, *ibid.*, 455); will of Martha Lee, 12 April 1877-10 May 1877 (*ibid.*, Will Book No. 1, p. 12)
40. William Aspinwall acquired a portion of the Lee land holdings in 1871 (see Chapter 11, note 13); the Merrie Oaks tract and Lee Hall lake are included in the Newport News Waterworks system.
41. *Daily Press*, March 15, 1931, p. 30.
42. Arber and Bradley, *Travels and Works of Captain John Smith*, 583, 591-592; Nell Marion Nugent, *Cavaliers and Pioneers*, 4.
43. *Ibid.*, 39, 158, 258; Virginia Land Patents, Book 7, p. 107; for later owners of tracts in the area see Alexander Crosby Brown, *Lake Maury in Virginia*, 25-27
44. Interview with Miss Betty Curtis, who lived at End View.
45. Will of Daniel Prentice Curtis of Mulberry Island, 9 December 1857, pr. 1858; \$1000 to son, Humphrey H. Curtis, to trade land with his uncle, Humphrey Harwood [End View]; Warwick County records, Will Book No. 1, p. 1, Clerk of Courts, No. 1, Newport News; *post* Chapter 8.
46. H. R. McIlwaine, *Minutes of the Council and General Court of Colonial Virginia*, 190; Thomas Merry, Esq., member of the Virginia Company, knighted 1617, cousin and executor of John Pountis (Alexander Brown, *The Genesis of the United States*, 948.
47. W. W. Hening, *Statutes at Large*, IV, 307.
48. *Ibid.*, VIII, 301.
49. *Virginia Journals of the House of Burgesses*, 1773-76, p. 117.
50. *Ibid.*, 118.
51. W. W. Hening, *Statutes at Large*, IX, 226.

5

Religion

Provision for Ministers

IN recognition of the indispensable role of the church in the colony of Virginia, the Virginia Company in 1618 made specific provisions for ministers, directing that one hundred acres of glebe land be set aside in every borough for maintenance of the minister, and in addition, that he be paid a living by his parishioners in an amount equal to two hundred pounds sterling.¹ This was a considerable stipend when paid, as it was, in the currency of the day — tobacco.

Church Attendance Required

Moreover, the laws and orders for Virginia, enacted at the Assembly held March 1624, required that there should be in every plantation a house or room set aside for worship and not to be used for any temporal purpose.² Then, in order to put the force of law back of a requirement for attendance, a fine of one pound of tobacco was authorized levied against anyone who absented himself, without good reason, from divine worship on Sunday, and a fine of fifty pounds of tobacco could be exacted for a month's absence.³ (As there was very little hard money in the Virginia colony, tobacco was the medium of exchange.) Thus, when John Newman of Warwick County was fined five shillings or fifty pounds of tobacco in 1748 for not frequenting his parish church,⁴ the extent of his absence from regular Sunday services can be accurately estimated.

Duties of Churchwardens

Since there were few officers of the law to enforce order and promote morality, the churchwardens of the parish were charged with the responsibility of reporting to the Court twice a year misdemeanors, such as lack of respect for religion, swearing, drunkenness and immoral acts. An early report of such a pre-

sentment to the Court at Jamestown, made by the minister and churchwardens of Stanley Hundred Church on Mulberry Island is of record in 1627.⁵ Two delinquents are named and penalties imposed upon them recorded.

Vestry Responsibilities

Vestries of the churches later had many community responsibilities,⁶ in addition to the policing power early assigned to churchwardens. They were charged with duties to oversee the poor, bind out orphans, collect the tithes, and oversee the processioning (marking boundaries) of land.

Glebe at Newport's News

While the earliest record of a church building is that upon Mulberry Island in Stanley Hundred in the year 1627,⁷ one hundred acres of land had been set aside for a glebe at Newport's News by 1625. This glebe land lay on the James River shore abreast of the present Chesapeake and Ohio Railway pier nine and was adjacent to the one hundred acres allotted personally to the early minister of the area, George Keith.⁸ That there was a place of worship in the locality also appears certain, for in March 1628, the new plantations between Marie's Mount (Daniel Gookin's at Newport's News) and Waters Creek (area of Mariners Museum) were ordered to join into one parish and "contribute to the maintenance of Mr. George Keith, the minister."⁹

Stanley Hundred Church

The first Mulberry Island church¹⁰ was, as heretofore noted, in Stanley Hundred on Baker's Neck, adjacent to Thomas Harwood's plantation Queen's Hith. The structure was certainly simple and probably crude, but it served for some years the growing population in the area. The church was supplied with a minister, churchwardens and an active parish organization, whose "marriages, burials and christenings," were recorded in a

parish register, a mention of which is of record in 1627, unfortunately without names.¹¹ The early church was replaced later by a brick structure.

Not only did the Virginia Assembly require church attendance but the solons enacted into law, 1632, a requirement that church buildings be kept in good repair and reenacted the law in 1661.¹²

Nutmeg Quarter Parish

It is probable that the Nutmeg Quarter church was erected about 1631 or 1632. It was the center of the parish of that name lying in the area of the present Mariners Museum. The quaint name probably is derived from a heavy growth of sassafras trees or myrtle (bayberry) trees or both since the term "nutmeg" is an archaic designation for any lauraceous tree bearing aromatic fruit.¹³ James Backler was the minister, having been recorded as serving the parish in 1647, at which time Garrett Stephens and Thomas Tignall were the churchwardens.¹⁴

Denbigh Parish Church

The first mention of Denbigh Parish is in a land patent issued, 1635, when the "Clark and Pastor of Denbigh," Thomas Butler, received 1000 acres of land across the James River in the area of Isle of Wight County.¹⁵ That a Denbigh church was in existence at that time is evident from a bequest in the will of Anthony Yonge of London, dated 23 February 1636, leaving to Denbigh church five hundred pounds of tobacco. Denbigh, as hitherto noted, at that time, was the thriving plantation of Captain Samuel Mathews.

The foundation and tile floor of the first Denbigh church were uncovered, 1956, on a wooded point on the eastern bank of the Warwick River opposite the lower end of Mulberry Island, and three-eighths of a mile above the present bounds of the Denbigh plantation.¹⁶ This first location was approximately two miles from the site of the later Denbigh church and the

present Denbigh Baptist church. In 1647, John Phillips was "Clark" of the parish church at Denbigh, at which time John Harlow and John Pauley had been appointed churchwardens.¹⁷

Nutmeg Quarter and Denbigh Parishes Unite

While the churches at Nutmeg Quarter and at Denbigh appear to have shared the services of James Backler, the minister prior to 1647, it was not until 1656 that the two parishes were united, the Nutmeg Quarter parishioners having at that time petitioned the Assembly to permit them to consolidate with Denbigh.¹⁸

Parish Boundaries

As differences existed between the congregations of the Denbigh and Mulberry Island parishes in 1674, legislative enactment settled the controversy by naming Brewer's land or Stanley Hundred, as the bounds of Mulberry Island parish and setting the bounds of Denbigh parish by the watershed surrounding the mill pond at the head of Warwick River and extending to include Nutmeg Quarter.¹⁹ In 1680, John Lawrence was serving as minister for both Denbigh and Mulberry Island parishes.²⁰

Warwick Parish

By 1726 the two parishes had been combined into one, known as Warwick parish, and ten years later the vestry of this parish was authorized to sell two parcels of glebe land, one at Waters Creek (Nutmeg Quarter glebe) and the other below (probably the glebe at Newport's News.)²¹ The newly designated parish of Warwick was then, as customary in Virginia counties, made coterminous with the county.

The two active churches in Warwick parish in existence at its founding continued to function separately. That at Denbigh became known as the Lower church, while the Mulberry Island church was designated the Upper church. While many parishioners fell away just prior to and immediately after the Revolu-

tionary War, as was generally true elsewhere, burials continued to be made in the Mulberry Island churchyard until 1822. Even before that date, many who normally would have followed the religion of their forebears, were joining the new congregations arising in Warwick, particularly the Baptists, the Disciples and the Methodists.

Episcopal Worship Abandoned

At the Lower church of Denbigh a frame building, 50 by 24 feet, was authorized in 1772 and probably completed by 1774.²² This building continued in use as an Episcopal church until 1818, when its last minister Mr. John Wood went back to England, although there appear to have been no vestry meetings after 1780.²³ Likewise, under legislative enactment of 1802, confiscating parish glebes, the church lands were sold and the proceeds, at least partly appropriated, 1809, to the construction of new county buildings.²⁴

Denbigh Baptist Church

The Denbigh Baptist congregation, organized in 1834, took over and occupied the abandoned site of the ancient Episcopal church. The church building, completed about 1774, was used as a stable by federal troops during the Civil War. The building was reconstructed about 1898 and modernized.²⁵ Since that time the church has been rebuilt and a congregation of four hundred or more members worships there regularly. The ancient altar tomb of Mary Harrison, who died in 1744, remains in the old churchyard.²⁶

Revival of Episcopal Worship

The Episcopal church, which languished for years following the Revolutionary War, now has five thriving congregations in the present city of Newport News. The revival of Episcopal worship in Warwick came about in 1880, when the Chesapeake and Ohio Railway was putting through its tracks. The

Reverend J. J. Gravatt, rector of St. John's in Hampton then organized the Episcopal congregation of Emmanuel which worshipped for the first five years in the school building at Gum Grove, the locality which later was renamed Morrison. The Reverend C. J. S. Mayo in 1880 became the first rector, and under his ministry the congregation erected a small frame building adjacent to the school house where services continued to be held until the early 1900's.

Meanwhile, in 1881, the Reverend Mayo undertook also a ministry in the developing community at Newport's News. A small group of Episcopalians assembled first in a boarding house, then in the railway station and in 1882 in the Union chapel erected on Twenty-Seventh Street. In 1883 a vestry was chosen, who in 1888 succeeded in erecting a house of worship in the one hundred block on Twenty-Fifth Street. This frame building, consecrated 31 May 1894 as St. Paul's Episcopal church, served until 1899 when the present stone edifice was erected in the two hundred block on Thirty-Fourth Street.²⁷ Then, the little frame church, which had been the setting for so many christenings, weddings and funerals of early citizens, was put on supports and laboriously moved during an entire summer up West Avenue (then unpaved) and down Thirty-Fourth Street to serve as a Parish house.

Other Episcopal congregations organized during the past fifty years now worship at Grace on Walnut Avenue, at St. Andrews in Hilton and at St. Stephens in Hidewood. The Negro congregation worshipping at St. Augustine's recently has been assisted by the Diocese in the erection of a new house of worship on Marshall Avenue.

NOTES

1. Susan Myra Kingsbury, *Records of the Virginia Company of London*, III, 102.
2. W. W. Hening, *Statutes at Large* (1823), I, 122, 123.
3. *Ibid.*, 144.

4. Warwick County Court Orders, 1748-1762, p. 30.
5. H. R. McIlwaine, *Minutes of the Council and General Court of Colonial Virginia*, 200.
6. George Carrington Mason, *Colonial Churches of Tidewater Virginia*, 112, 127.
7. Patent issued to Robert Poole 1627 on Warwick River, "Wly. towards the church there erected and built," Nell Marion Nugent, *Cavaliers and Pioneers*, 8.
8. Susan Myra Kingsbury, *Records of the Virginia Company of London*, IV, 557.
9. H. R. McIlwaine, *Minutes of the Council and General Court of Colonial Virginia*, 189.
10. Mr. Willis Hely (Heyley), "Clarke and Pastor of Mulberry Island," patent for 250 acres in said parish, 17 August 1635," in reward of his faithful paines and to encourage others in the calling," Nell Marion Nugent, *Cavaliers and Pioneers*, 30.
11. *Ante*, note 5.
12. W. W. Hening, *Statutes at Large*, I, 160, 185; II, 29.
13. George Carrington Mason, *Colonial Churches of Tidewater Virginia*, 121.
14. Loose papers Warwick County (Archives, Virginia State Library).
15. Nell Marion Nugent, *Cavaliers and Pioneers*, 26.
16. *Virginia Magazine of History and Biography*, LVII, 286-291.
17. Loose papers Warwick County (Archives, Virginia State Library).
18. W. W. Hening, *Statutes at Large*, I, 425.
19. *Virginia Magazine of History and Biography*, XXIII, 247.
20. *William and Mary College Quarterly*, ser. 2, XVII, 467.
21. W. W. Hening, *Statutes at Large*, IV, 537.
22. George Carrington Mason, *Colonial Churches of Tidewater Virginia*, 125.
23. *Ibid.*, 126.
24. *Ibid.*, 127.
25. *Ibid.*, 125.
26. *Ibid.*, 126.
27. See "St. Paul's in Ancient Parish," *Daily Press*, 14 May 1939, p. 2, sec. F; among the notable weddings was that of Miss Elizabeth Clark and Douglas Gordon of Baltimore, June 1897 (Elizabeth Gordon, *Days of Now and Then*, 60, 61).

Bacon's Rebellion

Virginia Granted to King's Favorites

THE first cause of dissatisfaction in the colony of Virginia after restoration of the monarchy in England, at which time Charles II came to the throne, was the extravagant and improvident grant by the King in 1673 of the whole of Virginia.¹ This lavish gift to two of the sovereign's favorites, Lords Arlington and Culpeper, was extended for thirty-one years and gave the noblemen all rights and privileges over Virginia, including levying and collection of taxes, the appointment of officials and granting and controlling of all lands.²

In a state of alarm, the Virginia Assembly authorized a commission to be sent to England, 1674,³ to bring about the repeal of this unwise and summary disposal of their homeland. In addition, the commission was urgently charged with seeking a new charter guaranteeing to the representative of the people the sole privilege of levying taxes within the colony.

Revolt Under Bacon⁴

In the midst of this uneasy situation, complicated by other grievances, unrestrained Indian raids on the border settlements⁵ touched off a popular revolt against the King's government in Virginia under Sir William Berkeley. Led by Nathaniel Bacon, the younger, the revolt gained momentum and support, particularly from the younger men, and in the outlying areas.

Notwithstanding the popularity of the movement and Bacon's seizure of the state house at nearby Jamestown, no enthusiastic leader appeared in Warwick to espouse the cause, though apparently there was a passive acquiescence to the revolt so long as Bacon was successful, and in any event support for the reforms which were enacted into law under the pressure of Bacon's leadership.

Colonel Cole's Influence

Warwick's position in the Rebellion may be attributed to two factors: the populace was not affected by the Indian raids; and the most influential man of his times in the county of Warwick was a member of the Council of State and a close adviser of Governor William Berkeley.⁶ Colonel William Cole in 1674 had acquired Bolthroe on the Warwick River from Governor William Berkeley and his wife, the erstwhile widow of Samuel Stephens.⁷ The same year Colonel Cole had been named a member of the Council, not only a high honor, but a position of influence and privilege. His support of Governor Berkeley throughout the Rebellion was unfailing, and his prestige in his county undoubtedly swayed sentiment in Warwick.

When Governor Berkeley was forced to flee from Jamestown and took refuge on the Eastern Shore, Colonel Cole accompanied him. Cole had been singled out by Nathaniel Bacon, as one of Governor Berkeley's "evil advisers."

Rebellion Collapses

When Nathaniel Bacon died and the Rebellion collapsed, Berkeley counted upon Colonel Cole to assist in his courts martial in which the most active participants in the Rebellion were condemned, and summarily hanged. Colonel Cole sat on the courts which condemned among others Giles Bland, a scion of one of the most prominent families in Virginia, John Giles of Isle of Wight, William Scarborough of the Eastern Shore.⁸ Not only were the leaders hanged and others punished by imprisonment but, by an act of attainder, their goods and lands were ordered confiscated. In the meantime Bacon's laws with the much needed reforms the people sought were repealed by acclamation.

Colonel Jeffrey's Commission of Inquiry

When news of the revolt in Virginia reached England the King immediately appointed a commission headed by Colonel

Herbert Jeffreys to inquire into the state of affairs in the colony.⁹ The other two members were Sir John Berry and Colonel Francis Moryson. To give the commission authority one thousand British soldiers were sent to act under their orders. When the soldiers arrived in Virginia, Bacon was dead and the revolt at an end. The effect of Governor Berkeley's drastic punishment of Bacon's chief aids had been to send fear throughout the colony and further alienate the people from his administration.

Shortly, 27 April 1677 Governor Berkeley was recalled to England,¹⁰ and the course of the commission then was not to punish the colonials further, but to ascertain the cause of the trouble and to act to heal the breach between the King's government and the people.¹¹ Since Bacon had exacted the oath of allegiance from all sections of Virginia, the entire country seemed back of him, even Warwick when the influence of Colonel Cole was at low ebb in his flight with the Governor to the Eastern Shore.

Warwick's Position in the Rebellion Stated

The King's Commission headed by Colonel Jeffreys gave the people in all sections an opportunity to state their case. An account of the "late war and rebellion" in Warwick addressed to the Commission is preserved among the state's colonial papers.¹² It sets forth that "the inhabitants, by reason of remoteness and great distance from the seat of the trouble, could give no account of the revolt." They declared "they were not participants, nor attached to any faction or party, but through fear of reprisals against their estates and families they had been forced unwillingly to take a side which was repugnant to them." The account was signed by Anthony Haynes, James Haley and Henry Charles and endorsed by Warwick's two members of the House of Burgesses, John Langhorne and Swan Rice. The account was posted for three weeks before being forwarded to the Commission under the date of March 1676/77.

Grievances

That Warwick did have grievances as did other sections of Virginia is evident in the petition to the Commissioners attached to the account urging, among a number of requests, that no taxes be levied except by a representative government in the colony, that the iniquitous fee system prevailing be regulated and, to curb excessive drinking, that all ordinaries be suppressed except those deemed necessary for the convenience of the county. Thus, Warwick joined with the other sections of the colony in asking that such provisions cared for in Bacon's repealed laws be reenacted.¹³

Taxation an Issue

While Warwick's remote position from the seat of the trouble and Colonel Cole's strong influence had spared the people of the county the indictments of the courts martial with their trail of hangings, imprisonments, and orders for confiscation of lands and possessions; yet, for the second time in the colony's existence the people of Warwick were irked at the regal policy. In 1635, Samuel Mathews had taken a leading part in the "thrusting out of Governor Sir John Harvey."¹⁴

Opposition to remote control of colonial affairs, particularly in the matter of taxation, thus, had flared into the open twice within a forty-year period. Not for a hundred years more, however, was opposition to crystalize in a revolt, which eventually brought about separation from England.

To appease the colonials, as well as for the sake of justice, the royal government sanctioned the repeal of the act of attainder and the reenactment of Bacon's laws, without, however, any recognition of the Rebel's influence in initiating the latter.¹⁵ Meanwhile some of Warwick's neighbors and kin in York County had suffered severely in the aftermath of the Rebellion, in consequence of their loyalty to Bacon and the popular cause.¹⁶

NOTES

1. W. W. Hening, *Statutes at Large* (1823), II, vi, 518.
2. *Ibid.*, 427.
3. *Ibid.*, 311, *et seq.*; the commissioners were: Col. Francis Moryson, Thomas Ludwell and Maj. Gen. Robert Smith; for their efforts in England, see *ibid.*, 518-521.
4. *Ibid.*, 341-365.
5. *Ibid.*, 326.
6. Col. Cole, witness to Gov. Berkeley's will, 2 May 1676 (H. R. McIlwaine, *Minutes of the Council and General Court of Colonial Virginia*, 535); he was one of two members of the Council delegated to confer with Bacon when the latter and his party besieged the State House at Jamestown; Cole also accompanied the Governor on his flight to the Eastern Shore (T. J. Wertenbaker, *Torchbearers of the Revolution*, 119, 120, 141).
7. W. W. Hening, *Statutes at Large* (1823), II, 321-325.
8. H. R. McIlwaine, *Minutes of the Council and General Court of Colonial Virginia*, 529, 530, 532.
9. *Virginia Magazine of History and Biography*, XXI, 361-364; the Commission made headquarters at Swann's Point across from Jamestown.
10. W. W. Hening, *Statutes at Large*, II, vii.
11. See act of indemnity and free pardon, before Governor Berkeley's departure, 20 February 1677, *ibid.*, 366, *et seq.*, and royal proclamation October 1677, *ibid.*, 428, *et seq.*
12. Warwick County petitions (original) (Archives, Virginia State Library)
13. *Ibid.*
14. Philip Alexander Bruce, *Institutional History of Virginia in the Seventeenth Century*, I, 356-57; also, *British Colonial Papers*, VIII, Nos. 61 and 85; E. D. Neill, *Virginia Carolorum*, 123, *et seq.*
15. See repeal of act of attainder by proclamation, 8 July 1680, W. W. Hening, *Statutes at Large*, II, 373; Bacon's laws, *ibid.*, 341-364; reenactment of, *ibid.*, V, 391n.
16. Thomas Hansford, aged 31, one of three York County leaders of Bacon's Rebellion, hanged and attainted, *ibid.*, 375; Edmund Chisman, imprisoned, died "of feare, or grieffe or bad usage" before trial, *ibid.*

Economic and Social Life

THE Warwick River, at Denbigh plantation, afforded something of a port for the county. The waterway sheltered the small ships plying the ocean as well as the Virginia waterways. Here was a wharf, a boat yard for repair of vessels and ship-building. A public rope walk was maintained in the area, indicating the general usefulness of the harbor to boat owners.

Ferries

Ferries, which, until the twentieth century was well advanced, were essential adjuncts to travel in tidewater were early in operation from Mulberry Island. They were regulated by the Assembly with fees established both for passage of men and horses.¹ As special privileges were granted the keepers of ferries, the operation of them was in the hands of responsible persons in the counties.² In 1748, when one of the several acts of the Assembly was passed setting tolls, a ferry was in operation between the lands owned by Henry Cary, another operated from Mulberry Island to Cocke's in Isle of Wight, while from the Warwicktown warehouse ran a ferry to the land of Thomas Moseley (location not known).³ At the upper end of Mulberry Island, Carter Crawford operated a ferry until 1792, which ran from Mulberry Island Point to Hardy's across the James River in Isle of Wight County. He petitioned the Assembly to abandon it when business fell off as the result of the movement of the capital from Williamsburg to Richmond.⁴

Ordinaries

With so much activity on Mulberry Island there evidently was need or at least business for a public house, and, in 1749, Matthew Wills, Gentleman, was given a permit by the Assembly to maintain an ordinary at his house at Mulberry Island

ferry.⁵ Richard Young maintained an ordinary at Warwick-town prior to abandonment of the town in 1809.⁶

Diversification in Agriculture and Industry Sought

From the time the colony of Virginia was established effort was made to diversify, so far as was possible, the means by which the people obtained a livelihood. However, the success of tobacco culture and the ensuing demand for the crop in England, turned time and attention of Virginia planters to that crop. Notwithstanding, experiments were constantly carried on in Virginia to determine other plants that might be successfully grown in the colony, or industries that might be promoted, such as silk culture and wine making.⁷ At least two of the plantations located in the present Newport News area were noteworthy for their experimental gardens, namely: Ceeley's and Peartree Hall, as noted. At Denbigh, as late as the twentieth century, there was preserved and exhibited a skein of silk said to have been spun from the cocoon of the silk worm nurtured on the mulberry trees growing on the plantation.

Prosperity of the colony of Virginia had so declined by the middle of the eighteenth century that the need for economic diversification was urgent. Bounties were offered and the publicizing of any useful discoveries or inventions authorized.⁸ To what extent the experimentation benefited the Warwick area is not known; however, the region continued to be largely agricultural until a decade and a half after the Civil War.

Sports

During the period, life in Warwick was a pleasurable affair. As the temperature in tidewater Virginia, for the most part, is mild, outdoor activity and sports may be engaged in the year round. The people of Warwick in the colonial period and after were well known for their sporting proclivities. Horseracing, fox hunts and coon hunts were popular among these descendants of the English, who carried on the traditions of their fore-

bears. Also, bowling at the ordinary, as well as card games and usually for stakes, were common pastimes of gentlemen, whose business on court days also provided ample time for sociability.⁹

Horses and Horse Breeding

Until the twentieth century was well advanced and the automobile began to supplant the horse, and the dirt roads of Warwick were replaced by hard surfaced highways, then only did the fine blooded horses, for which the county was noted, surrender their places to the automobile.

Not only were horses indispensable over the network of dirt roads and trails interlacing Warwick and connecting with adjoining counties, but they were supreme in the field of sports. As early as 1679, the protection of the breed of horses in Warwick was the concern of the Commissioners, who noted that a great number of small horses were running wild, and ordered that all horses be penned in order that the *breed in the county might not be crossed unfavorably*.¹⁰

*The Cary-McIntosh Horse Race*¹¹

Horse racing among friends was commonly engaged in. A race field was maintained on Harwood's plantation. Moreover, the people of Warwick took their sports seriously. Following one of the races run in 1729, Miles Cary sued Enos McIntosh. Oddly enough the record of the suit is extant among the few remaining original papers of Warwick County.

The contest took place at Harwood's race field over a quarter of a mile course between a gray horse run by Dixon Brown and Richard Holland's horse called Foxhunter. Miles Cary bet one thousand pounds of tobacco on Foxhunter while Enos McIntosh bet the same on the gray horse. Evidently Foxhunter came in ahead, but for some reason McIntosh refused to meet his obligation. Then Cary took the matter to court. The jury, of which Mathew Jones of Bourbon was foreman, after due deliberation,

cut Cary's winnings in half and he had to be content with five hundred pounds of tobacco.

Tournaments

Another favorite pastime of the people of Warwick, especially in the nineteenth century, and one in which the horsemanship to which they were bred, could be displayed, was in tournaments.¹² During the summer months there was a round of these affairs, in which the best horsemen of the county represented the various sections. The knight of Warwick, the knight of Mulberry Island, the knight of Denbigh and so forth, appeared both in the county and in adjacent counties. Crowds assembled from the whole countryside. The horseman most adept at obtaining on his lance the suspended rings while he paced his mount over a course, was privileged to name the "Queen of Love and Beauty." Forthwith, in gay ceremonies, she was crowned and general festivities, including dancing, followed.

Perfect coordination of man with beast was required in this type of riding. With the pawn to be had no larger than a lady's wedding ring, only one born to the saddle, so to speak, and mounted on a blooded horse, could compete.

Fox Hunting

Fox hunting was engaged in until the early part of the twentieth century when both the declining number of horses, less experienced riders and restricted areas in the county, sent the few remaining sportsmen with their baying hounds into less populated areas, or into retirement.

Coon Hunts

Coon hunting, undertaken largely on foot by moonlight in swampy areas, was an occasion for general joviality and conviviality. Under the crisp air of a frosty moon, participants found it helpful to revive their waning spirits as they mired in

bogs following the dogs in pursuit of the distraught prey. As dawn approached many a weary coon hunter, sporting the tail of his quarry, has made his way out of the swamp between Newmarket and Scone's Dams.¹³

NOTES

1. Act to provide and maintain ferries, 1641, W. W. Hening, *Statutes at Large*, I, 269; county court to establish ferries, 1647, *ibid.*, 348; order for locating ferries, 1673, *ibid.*, II, 310; regulation of ferries, 1702, *ibid.*, III, 218.
2. *Ibid.*, 221.
3. *Ibid.*, VI, 14, 15.
4. Warwick County petitions (original) (Archives, Virginia State Library); this ferry established 1748.
5. Warwick County Court Orders, 1748-1762, p. 69.
6. Warwick County petition for removal of Court House to Stoney Run, 23 December 1807, reciting "Richard Young, the tavern keeper at Court House [Warwicktown] offered £100 for its continuance at present site." (Archives, Virginia State Library).
7. Susan Myra Kingsbury, *Records of the Virginia Company of London*, III, 221, 237, 240, 661; Frenchmen transported to Virginia for planting and dressing grape vines, rebuked 1632 for turning to tobacco culture (W. W. Hening, *Statutes at Large* (1823), I, 161.
8. Philip Alexander Bruce, *Economic History of Virginia in the Seventeenth Century*, II, 459.
9. For sports and games of the colonial period see *Jamestown 350th Anniversary Historical Booklets*, No. 17, pp. 70, 71, 76.
10. Loose papers Warwick County (Archives, Virginia State Library).
11. *Ibid.*
12. Tournaments held into the 20th century; among the well known riders in Warwick were Frank and Pat Garrow.
13. This swampy area is now (1960-61) being drained and a road under construction extends Marshall Avenue to the Newmarket Shopping Center.

Revolutionary War

WHEN, in the language of the Constitution submitted 1775, the regal government of Virginia was dissolved, no other form had been adopted. The militia laws had been allowed to expire, the revenues of the crown were in the hands of its late officers. "Thus," in the words of Walter Hening, "the fathers of the Revolution, when they dared that hazardous enterprise, found themselves without a government, without men and without money. . . . The progress of the revolutionary movement shows with what facility these difficulties were surmounted."¹

Committees of Safety

One of the first measures adopted by the American people to resist the authority of Great Britain was a system of self-denial called the Continental Association, or non-importation agreement.² To enforce the agreement not to accept goods from England, the General Congress had recommended the appointment of Committees of Safety in the several colonies.³

On 17 July 1775 a Convention of delegates and representatives of the counties and corporations within the colony of Virginia assembled in Richmond and enacted the most necessary ordinances to enable an interregnum government to function.⁴ Among these were provisions to raise a provincial army under control of the Committee of Safety to Virginia, and ordinances for levying of taxes. The two delegates serving Warwick in the old House of Burgesses, William Langhorne and William Harwood, continued their services in the Convention, for both gentlemen are recorded as having assisted in molding the new government. The unfinished business of the first session was carried on in a second gathering which convened, December 1775,⁵ in Richmond, but shortly adjourned to function in the colonial capital.

British Rule Dissolved

In session again by 6 May 1776, the Convention adopted the Constitution and declared the government of George III over Virginia to be totally dissolved.⁶ Warwick's delegates, Colonel William Harwood and Richard Cary, took the momentous step, along with others, leading to independence from Great Britain.

Meanwhile, the Convention of 1775 had authorized the election of Committees of Safety in every county, these to function in the limited areas as did the overall Committee.⁷ They were specifically charged with the responsibility of swearing in the field officers of the militia. At once William Harwood and William Langhorne assumed leadership in Warwick, and Harwood, particularly, was active on the Committee.⁸ The members of the County Committee, limited to twenty-one persons, were chosen from among "the most discreet, fit and able men of the county, being freeholders." When the work of the Virginia Convention was accomplished and a government set up for Virginia, then the delegates convened, 6 May 1776 and again on 7 October 1776 in the city of Williamsburg. At the important first Assembly of the Commonwealth of Virginia held in May, Warwick, as noted, was represented by Colonel William Harwood and Richard Cary.⁹

Militiamen

But before this Assembly convened the militia had been organized in Warwick, guards were stationed at Newport's News and were authorized to be paid 17 April 1776.¹⁰ These guards no doubt were stationed at Newport's News Point where there were located landing facilities and a shipyard for repair and building small vessels. There is a record of the sloop *Lady Charlotte* built at Newport's News by Holder Hudgins and used by the British colonial Governor Dunmore to resist the colonists, when he was forced to flee Williamsburg and took a position on Gwynn's Island in the present Mathews County.¹¹

*The British Land at Newport's News*¹²

The invasion of Warwick by the British and the incursions of plundering detachments, which harassed the countryside, began late in 1780. By then the Southern Campaign, initiated by the British to win over the Carolinas, Georgia and Florida, was well under way. To supplement the operations of this campaign, which, since June 1780, had been in the hands of Lord Cornwallis, Sir Henry Clinton, in New York, determined upon desultory expeditions in Virginia. His plan was "to stop up in great measure the Chesapeake Bay, and by commanding the James River prevent the Americans from forming any considerable depots upon it, or moving in any force to the southward of it." Thus, the Chesapeake Bay and the James River were conceived as a strategic dividing line to separate the thirteen states.

By June 1780, British ships were in Hampton Roads. Colonel Mallory of Elizabeth City County reported to Governor Thomas Jefferson the appearance of a hostile fleet, noting his fear of invasion. These fears were well founded.

On 20 October 1780, a British fleet of 54 ships appeared in Hampton Roads, and three days later landing facilities at Newport's News were in use. One thousand infantrymen and one hundred horse were put ashore at the Point. They immediately proceeded to Hampton and took possession there. The residue of the British force, approximating 4000 men remained aboard the ships.

Governor Jefferson reported to General Gates that the British at Hampton had committed "horrid depredations," and then had returned to the ships, which, by evening of 26 October, were strung along the roadstead from Newport's News to the Nansemond River. Anticipating that the ships, which were under armed convoy, intended to go up the James River, Governor Jefferson noted the British were "in a net."

Nevertheless, with command of Newport's News Point, the British were able to maneuver at will up and down the James River. Not infrequently raids were staged in Warwick and Elizabeth City Counties and in other areas along the important estuary.

Harbor Protection Authorized

While Cornwallis maneuvered his force in the Carolinas, and British cruisers patrolled Hampton Roads and the lower James River, the uneasy calm which had prevailed in Warwick came to an end. Already, precautionary measures were being taken to face the impending danger. In October 1780, the Assembly had taken cognizance of the presence of small British cruisers in the Chesapeake Bay, and their depredations and interference with trade along the navigable rivers.¹³ Accordingly, the Assembly authorized that the brig *Jefferson*, with the armed boats *Liberty* and *Patriot* be manned and fitted out to suppress the cruisers and afford "protection and safety to the good citizens exposed to the ravages of the enemy."¹⁴ In addition, two galleys building, the *Thetis* and the *Lewis* were ordered made ready for similar service.

With increased protection for the eastern seaboard, Virginia also stepped up the Commonwealth's recruiting for a quota of 3000 men to be furnished the Continental line.¹⁵ Warwick County, probably having already met requirements for service, was requested to furnish only seven men.

Benedict Arnold Plunders in "Warwick"

By January 1781, the danger which the people feared had materialized. The British pursued their tactics by sweeping the James River. General Henry Clinton sent down from New York, in December 1780, General Benedict Arnold, who had deserted the American forces in his well known attempt to hand over West Point, New York, to the British. On 2 January 1781, a

hostile fleet of 19 ships, 2 brigs and 10 sloops were anchored in the lower James.¹⁶

In a report to Sir Henry Clinton dated 28 May 1781, General Arnold recited that he had been "at Cary's Mills, and in Warwick."¹⁷ He described in detail the pillage and plunder in the locality. The area of this destruction, however, was *not* in Warwick County, but in Chesterfield County, south of Richmond. In 1748 a town named Warwick had been established in a region on the James River, which was then Henrico County. By the time of Arnold's raid a considerable industrial development had taken place in the town. There were ship-building facilities, warehouses, tan and bark houses full of hides and bark as well as storehouses for tobacco. The growing young industrial center and its enterprises were totally destroyed by Arnold in accordance with the British objective to prevent the Continentals from establishing any depots on the James River.

*Tarleton's Raid*¹⁸

Lieutenant Colonel Banistre Tarleton,¹⁹ the dashing British cavalry officer was sent to the lower Peninsula, May 1781, on a reconnaissance expedition. His mission was to obtain information, concerning the Peninsula for General Cornwallis. Tarleton pushed towards Warwick County Court House, then located on the bluff at the mouth of Warwick River. Tarleton reported that, as he neared his destination, his patrol fell in with a party of four hundred colonials, who were routed "with great loss to the Americans and a trifling detriment to the British." His important gain in this raid was the capture of fifty American militiamen from whom the British learned that the Continental forces had posted one thousand men between Williamsburg and Richmond and were awaiting the arrival of General Anthony Wayne and his Pennsylvanians, together with other reinforcements.²⁰

Operations at Newport's News

Report was made to General Lafayette in Williamsburg, March 1781, that the British had landed on the lower Peninsula from about twenty boats and were strewn along the shore from Newport's News to Hampton River, but there were not sufficient American forces in the area to prevent their landing.²¹ On the same day two British ships, full of men, were reported at Newport's News Point where they took on additional men and departed.²²

Colonel Dundas' Raid

Colonel Dundas of the British Army staged one of the numerous plundering expeditions in March 1781, a detailed account of which is available.²³ Landing a force of three hundred regulars at Back River in Elizabeth City County, he raided the Selden plantation at Buckroe, gathered produce, slaughtered cattle and loaded the loot on small boats drawn up on the shore. Then, his men swept through Elizabeth City County into lower Warwick gathering spoils as they went to load the second haul of booty on two brigs and a sloop awaiting them at Newport's News. These vessels, upon arrival at the appointed landing place in the afternoon, had fired three guns as a signal they had reached the agreed destination.

Meanwhile, following the raid at Buckroe, a pursuit was organized. Two officers, Major Callis and Lieutenant Allen, with twenty volunteers followed upon Dundas' rear, firing upon the British and generally harassing the soldiers as they swept through the countryside. They passed Armistead's tide mill on the way to Newport's News, but the hastily organized party of colonials could do little but pursue the enemy; thus, Dundas and his men reached Newport's News, and about nine o'clock in the evening loaded their spoils on the waiting boats and pushed off.

While there were not adequate forces in the area to defend the countryside against British raids, the colonials were by no

means inactive. A report from Newport's News in April 1781 describes an engagement between a British sloop which had sailed out of Portsmouth to Newport's News. She was challenged by the lately commissioned *Patriot*, patrolling the lower James River. The encounter, in which shots were exchanged, lasted two hours, at the end of which time the sloop limped back to Portsmouth.²⁴

Captain Mallory Attacks the British

Concurrently, Captain Walls with a company of Warwick militia was patrolling the land area in the upper part of the county.²⁵ His men may have been the look-out militia described in an account of a plundering and foraging party under command of Captain Brown, a British Marine officer.²⁶ With forty men Brown was landed at Newport's News from one of the British vessels anchored in Hampton Roads. He and his men were proceeding along the James River bank when they were discovered by the look-out who gave the alarm. Forthwith, Captain Edward Mallory of Elizabeth City assembled a company of thirty mounted volunteers who came upon the British about seven miles above Newport's News, as they were leaving a river farm with carts loaded with plunder. Captain Mallory, dividing his men, had them charge the British from the front and from the flank. Thus maneuvering, the Americans forced the British to retreat down the Warwick road, the Americans firing upon them from either side. As the British neared Newport's News Point where they had left their boats, Captain Brown received a serious bullet wound. Unable to go on, he directed his Lieutenant to leave him and have the able remaining men push for the boats. Although Captain Mallory's men pursued the British to the water's edge, steady discipline enabled them to get off. They carried with them their killed and wounded except Captain Brown, but not their plunder, which was left behind in the carts.

Captain Mallory and his men, with one dead and seven wounded, took Captain Brown to Hampton where he was cared for at the house of Doctor Brodie. Under a flag of truce the British sent Captain Brown articles of comfort and, upon request, were given permission to return him to his ship, but he was never able to be moved. After lingering about two months, the British officer died.

The Peninsula Invested by Cornwallis

The Southern Campaign on which the British had relied so heavily was not the success that had been hoped for, nor were the Loyalists, who had been expected to aid, so numerous as anticipated. From the Carolinas, Lord Cornwallis withdrew into Virginia, arriving at Petersburg, 20 May 1781. From there he proceeded upon an alarming circuit of the heart of the state, and in July 1781, crossed the James River to the southward to join a British force entrenched at Portsmouth.

Deeming that land area unhealthy for his men, Cornwallis had them billeted on ships and took a position of observation and annoyance in Hampton Roads. After having surveyed Old Point as possible headquarters, Cornwallis abandoned the location as "inadequate," and moved his base to Yorktown. Then, he invested the whole countryside, including York, Warwick and Elizabeth City counties. All except a few able-bodied men had escaped. Those remaining were forced to surrender their arms and give their parole. A contemporary account records that the conditions on the Peninsula at that time were "truly distressing."²⁷

Cornwallis Map of Peninsula

During the British occupation at Portsmouth, or while Lord Cornwallis and his forces occupied ships in Hampton Roads, the British General had a map drawn of the lower Peninsula, including York, Warwick and Elizabeth City, showing the geographical areas and landmarks.²⁸ While the map is not alto-

gether accurate, it must have been of considerable service. The original is now in the Clemons Library, at Ann Arbor, Michigan.

When Cornwallis entrenched himself at Yorktown he gave evidence that he intended to fortify that place securely. Forthwith, General George Washington began hastily to draw plans which he hoped, with the cooperation of the French, would entrap the British.

*The Role of James River Boatmen*²⁹

An embargo already had been laid on shipping in the James River.³⁰ The Governor of Virginia, in cooperation with Washington's plan, issued orders to Commodore James Barron, senior officer of the Virginia State Navy, to collect all the officers under him and all the small craft of every description that he could find in the James River, and assemble them at Trebell's landing (Grove Wharf).³¹

The purpose of this order was soon evident. Rochambeau's forces had been marched from Rhode Island down to Annapolis where they, with New Jersey and New York troops, were put on board French frigates sent by Admiral De Grasse, and brought down the Chesapeake Bay to the James River to be disembarked at College Landing, Jamestown and Burwell's Ferry (Kingsmill wharf). The stores and artillery were unloaded at Trebell's.³² The function of the James River mosquito fleet in which there was many a Warwick County boatman was not only to assist in unloading men and equipment from the frigates, but they had been busy scouring the countryside as ordered to do, collecting provisions from every quarter and depositing them at Trebell's, where a sufficient force had been stationed to protect these vital supplies for the army.

Washington's Army Halts at End View

The reinforcements for Washington's army, joined by Lafayette's forces already in Virginia, then headed on foot down the Peninsula towards Yorktown. When they arrived at End

View, on the road to Yorktown just beyond the present Lee Hall, they were halted in late afternoon for rest and refreshment. At the ever-flowing spring on the plantation, bucket after bucket of water was drawn, and the men consumed it dipper after dipper, to the point that a Negro house servant watching the procedure apprehensively, finally hastened to Mrs. Harwood, her mistress. "Fore Gawd, Missus," she exclaimed, "'taint gwine be nary a drap o' water to make tea fur supper." Then, urged by her mistress to check the well again, she returned, cheerfully announcing: "Tis jes as much water as 'twere furst."³³

The Surrender

The rest of the story is part of the nation's history. While the forces commanded by Washington, Rochambeau and Lafayette converged on Cornwallis by land, the French fleet under Admiral DeGrasse had appeared off the mouth of the Chesapeake Bay to shut off relief to Cornwallis by sea.³⁴ Then the battle was joined at Yorktown. Lord Cornwallis, shut off from possible reinforcement, realized the danger to his force and undertook to escape across the York River to the Gloucester side, also held by the British. A heavy northeast storm made the crossing impossible. Expediency dictated only one course — surrender.³⁵

The news quickly reached across York's county line to Warwick. The harassment in Warwick by the British was now at end, but the toll had been heavy. Farms had been rifled of their live stock and provisions by the marauding parties. Of the little that had been left, Warwick people gave generously when the call came for provisions and supplies for Washington's army.

While the British surrender in the area adjoining Warwick brought to an end major military operations in the lately created United States of America, actual peace was to be contingent

upon the outcome of lengthy negotiations. Likewise, the Revolutionary War marked the establishment of a new order in the erstwhile British colonies.

NOTES

1. W. W. Hening, *Statutes at Large* (1823 edition), IX, iii-v.
2. *Ibid.*; Wm. Harwood and Wm. Langhorne representing Warwick signed the agreement 30 May 1774 (*Calendar of Virginia State Papers*, VIII, 53).
3. W. W. Hening, *Statutes at Large*, IX, iii.
4. *Ibid.*, 9, *et seq.*
5. *Ibid.*, 75.
6. *Ibid.*, 112, *et seq.*
7. *Ibid.*, 57-59.
8. *Virginia Magazine of History and Biography*, II, 184, 185.
9. Wm. G. and Mary Newton Stanard, *Colonial Virginia Register* (1902), 209.
10. *Virginia Magazine of History and Biography*, XXXI, 331.
11. Alexander Crosby Brown, "Milestones in the History of Newport News," *Daily Press*, 29 June 1958, p. 13 D.
12. Henry P. Johnston, *Yorktown Campaign and Surrender of Cornwallis*, 18-23; H. R. McIlwaine, *Official Letters of the Governors of Virginia*, II, 221, 223, 224, 227.
13. W. W. Hening, *Statutes at Large* (1823 edition), X, 297.
14. *Ibid.*, 379.
15. *Ibid.*, 257, 326, 328.
16. Henry P. Johnston, *Yorktown Campaign and Surrender of Cornwallis*, 32, 34; "the advance of the fleet were . . . in Warrasqueak [Burwell's] Bay" (*Official Letters of the Governors of Virginia*, II, 261).
17. Lieut. Col. Banistre Tarleton, *History of the Campaign of 1780 and 1781 in the Southern Provinces of North America*, 337; for Warwick in Chesterfield, see *Official Letters of the Governors of Virginia*, II, 316, note 237 (Richmond, 1928).
18. Lieut. Col. Banistre Tarleton, *History of the Campaign of 1780 and 1781 in the Southern Provinces of North America*, 292.
19. See Burk's *History of Virginia*, IV.
20. Henry P. Johnston, *Yorktown Campaign and Surrender of Cornwallis*, 35.

21. *Calendar of Virginia State Papers 1652-1781*, p. 600.
22. *Ibid.*, 598.
23. *Ibid.*, 562.
24. Tyler's *Quarterly Historical and Genealogical Magazine*, VIII, 257.
25. *Ibid.*
26. *Virginia Historical Register*, III, 199, 200, *et seq.*
27. *Ibid.*
28. Photostat.
29. The Commonwealth was desperately in need of sailors for available small craft; an act of the Assembly, October 1780, authorized "one half of male orphans . . . who may live below the falls . . . to be bound out to the sea under the most prudent captains." W. W. Hening, *Statutes at Large*, X, 385; impressment of seamen, *ibid.*, 380.
30. *Ibid.*, 376, 423, 443.
31. *Virginia Historical Register*, I, 79; also, see Lafayette's letter to Von Steuben, 1781, "collect every boat on the River [James]," Henry P. Johnston, *Yorktown Campaign and Surrender of Cornwallis*, 34.
32. *Ibid.*, 101, 102; also see diary of march, *ibid.*, 170, 171.
33. This family record according to the late Miss Betty Curtis, who lived at End View and was a descendant of the Revolutionary owners.
34. Henry P. Johnston, *Yorktown Campaign and Surrender of Cornwallis*, 98, 101.
35. *Ibid.*, 149, 150.

The Post Revolutionary Period

WHILE the surrender at Yorktown brought to a close the major hostilities between England and her colonies in North America,¹ the peace treaty was more than a year in the making. Not until 20 January 1783 were terms agreed upon at Versailles, France, and then it was 12 April 1783 before official announcement was received in the states.² Meanwhile, significant changes were being wrought to effect a system to meet the needs of the growing population of the confederated states. The change over to the new order was not an easy transition and the impact was felt in an economic depression.

Newport's News, a Port of Entry, 1786

The situation in Warwick was typical of the changing economic and social system. At the same time, in the midst of the many problems of the state of Virginia, the solons began to take cognizance of the strategic location, Newport's News Point, which had served the British so well in their landing expeditions in 1780-1781. Hence, in 1786, Newport's News was designated as the port of entry for all vessels proceeding up the James River and coming either from Maryland, or from waters beyond the Capes. Here a naval officer was stationed and any ship failing to make entry upon reaching the Point, was subject to seizure.³ Even so, the times were not conducive to a development, which the ample harbor justified, and which was to take place following the Civil War.

The Westward Movement

The recourse of the rising generation from the economic slough which afflicted the Atlantic seaboard was "to go west."⁴ Land bounties in the northwest territory, the latter ceded to the United States by Virginia in 1781,⁵ were available to those who served during the Revolutionary War. In the virgin

territory could be the beginning of a new life — one apart from the old world traditions which had long dominated tidewater Virginia, one away from the depredations wrought by the British in Warwick, and on land not exhausted by tobacco culture. Eventually, families found their way west of the Mississippi. Today, descendants of Peninsular families may be found throughout the United States.

Population

The state enumeration for Warwick County based on the Virginia tax list of 1782-1785, showed one hundred and eleven families with 586 white persons and 774 Negroes. (The 1790 United States census records for Virginia are missing.)⁶ William Digges, heir of William Cole, and owner of large tracts of land from Denbigh to Newport's News was the owner of eighty-nine slaves, while Edward Harwood is credited with forty-five, the next largest number.

Hardship

That the people in Warwick had felt severely the impact of the war is evident from petitions addressed to the Assembly.⁷ On 29 November 1785, Matthew Wills asked payment for a cargo of Virginia made salt impounded for use of military forces, setting forth his need for relief, and he also petitioned for relief from judgment against him for arrears in taxes. Mathew McVey, bereft of his job as foreman of the Warwick public rope walk through British depredations, declared in 1796 that he was destitute. Wilson Cary sought in 1781 payment for 1450 pounds of beef commandeered for troops in Gloucester and still unpaid. Robert Brown is recorded as a suicide. Carter Crawford could no longer make a living from his ferry operating from Mulberry Island, as the capital had been moved to Richmond. Both Arthur Graves and Benjamin Beasley,⁸ late inspectors of the Warwick warehouse, had to petition in 1784 for unpaid salaries due 1780-81. The people dissatisfied with

the location of the court house, since the roads as well as the waterways were becoming the avenues of travel, asked for its removal from the site at Warwicktown, at the mouth of Deep Creek, to Stoney Run on the traveled highway.⁹

A Changing Era

Meanwhile, vast changes were being effected in the political, economic and fiscal systems of Virginia. The old established families, entrenched in office by virtue of the appointive system, under the Republic, faced the requirement of standing for election. Even though suffrage was limited to land owners, there was less security in family tenure in office. The British system of entailed land holdings came to an end in 1787 by legislative enactment, thus vesting lands in fee simple and rendering family holdings subject to attachment for debt.¹⁰ This resulted in the breaking up of many huge estates with acreage in the thousands. By 1792 Virginia, in cooperation with other states, abandoned the British monetary system. The Assembly ordered that all public accounts be kept in dollars or units, dimes or tenths.¹¹ The change was quickly effected in the keeping of commercial accounts.

Religion did not escape the change being wrought. So generally unpopular had the British system become that congregations fell away from the established church. Some joined the new sects while others turned away altogether from church attendance. A Warwick petition of 15 May 1784 to the Assembly noted the neglect of religion and morality in the state and deemed it wise "to turn to the propagation of the Holy Christian religion," and requested a general assessment upon "all tythables of the Commonwealth." By such material evidence, sixty-six signers of the Warwick petition declared their intentions of being "as good Christians as they meant to be citizens."¹² The support of the church by legal levy in Warwick, as elsewhere, had been suspended in 1776. Under the Commonwealth, the

suspension was continued until the church was disestablished as a function of the state.

Newport's News Plantation Divided into Farms

One of the significant changes, which actually began in the immediate pre-Revolutionary era, was the breaking up of the Newport's News plantation into farms. The division had begun by 1759 when Hezekiah Smith is recorded in possession of a tract near Newport's News Point. By 1761 Anthony Hawkins had acquired acreage, and by 1769, Thurmer Dunn owned a quarter of a mile frontage along the James River bank between Twenty-Sixth Street and the ravine at Thirty-First Street. The latter, later was known as Wilbern's.

A map recorded in the clerk's office of Elizabeth City County (Hampton), 19 August 1769, shows land owners in the area of the old city of Newport News and adjacent territory. Despite extensive holdings, William Digges, who had inherited the Newport's News plantation, was in dispute over boundaries. Digges was the great-grandson of William Cole II, to whom 1431 acres of the escheat land at Newport's News had been granted in 1685. The 1769 survey was recorded in Elizabeth City County as much of the land extended from a James River frontage into that county.

Information regarding ownership in the division of Newport's News plantation is available through legal suits and recorded transactions. Data was assembled in detail by the late William T. Stauffer, attorney-at-law, who specialized in land titles. He made his knowledge available through a series of articles published in 1934-35 in the *William and Mary College Quarterly* (Series 2), Volumes XIV and XV,¹³ and in the *Newport News Daily Press* of March 1934.¹⁴

Several members of the Lee family owned the tracts on which the Shipyard subsequently was located. Parker West had acquired by 1831 the land on which the Chesapeake and Ohio Railway terminals were constructed. Wilberns, originally ac-

quired by Thurmer Dunn, was the site of most of the old Casino grounds, a very small portion of which is now Christopher Newport Park.

The Briarfield plantation extending back two miles into Elizabeth City County, and to which the present Briarfield road led, had a narrow James River frontage. Prior to 1792, Briarfield was the home of Wilson Curle, and by 1849 had been acquired by Baker P. Lee.

The Hawkins Farm

The only land in the old city of Newport's News, which remains in the ownership of descendants of pre-Revolutionary War owners is a portion of the Hawkins tract. The three hundred and twenty-three acres acquired by Anthony Hawkins originally extended from Thirty-Sixth Street along the James River bank to a ravine angling between Thirty-First and Thirty-Second Streets. The southern portion of this farm was, in 1873, in possession of Indiana Melson, heir of William Hawkins. She had agreed to sell, but fell ill and died before the sale could be consummated. Through the family attorney, a piece of land, to become exceedingly valuable was saved. The Melson building at the corner of Washington Avenue and Thirtieth Street takes its name from the family and stands on land originally a portion of the Hawkins tract.

*Mulberry Island Farms*¹⁵

Land's End, the home of Daniel Prentis Curtis (1803-1858), and his wife Elizabeth Reade Harwood was divided by him into Upper Land's End and Lower Land's End. The former was the home of James M. Curtis, treasurer of Warwick County, who became the first treasurer of Newport News when the city was incorporated, 1896. At that time James M. Curtis sold Upper Land's End to his nephew Simon Curtis, who succeeded him as the treasurer of Warwick County, and who remained in that office until 1945. During World War I the federal

government acquired both Curtis farms, when the whole of Mulberry Island was purchased for conversion into a military post, renamed Fort Eustis.

Water View, also on Mulberry Island, became the home of William Harwood, son of William Harwood of Warwick's Revolutionary period. The elder Harwood, who lived at End View, deeded Water View to his son.

Shelly, the adjacent farm to Water View was the birthplace of Doctor Benjamin W. Green. It was he who found among family papers the Warwick County Minute Book, 1748-1762, one of the few pre-Civil War county documents remaining intact. He had the book rebound, and inscribed, it is now in the office of the Clerk of Courts, Part 2 of the city of Newport News.

Other pre-Civil War farms on Mulberry Island were: White House, Blows and Middle House. Fort Crawford, on the Island, was constructed by the Confederates as part of a chain of fortifications stretched across the Peninsula in 1861-62.¹⁶

War of 1812

Before the people of Virginia had adjusted to conditions resulting from the Revolution, the new states of America in 1812 were again at war with England. On 21 June 1813, a message was sent to the Governor of Virginia setting forth the naval strength of the British, who were again patrolling Hampton Roads.¹⁷ At the mouth of the James River, said the report, there were eleven frigates, three transports and six tenders — two of them armed schooners, one "the revenue cutter lately taken from us." The dispatcher noted that it was impossible to oppose the British with not more than five hundred men and officers available, and many of them ill in the hospital.

At End View, in the upper part of the county, Colonel Kirby's militia was stationed during the War of 1812.¹⁸ The location, midway between the James and the York Rivers, in

which British vessels were operating, made it a desirable location for the Virginia militia on guard to protect the Peninsula.

NOTES

1. See "Address of Congress" to states, 17 December 1781, warning of over confidence after "reduction of powerful British garrison in Virginia" and successes elsewhere (W. W. Hening, *Statutes at Large*, X, 578-580).
2. *Ibid.*, XI 549-551; proclamation issued in Virginia, 21 April 1783, *ibid.*, 551, 552.
3. *Ibid.*, XII, 313.
4. Three western Virginia counties, Jefferson, Fayette and Lincoln, were erected into the District of Kentucky, 1782. *Ibid.*, XI, 85. A heavy migration westward brought about the erection of Kentucky into a state, 1790.
5. *Ibid.*, X, 564, *et seq.*; XI, 561-565.
6. *Is That Lineage Right?* (issued by National Society Daughters of American Revolution, 1958), p. 35; missing also are 1790 returns of New Jersey, Delaware, Georgia, Kentucky and the Southwest Territory (Tennessee), destroyed when the U. S. Capitol building was burned by the British, 1814; see Augusta B. Fothergill and John Mark Naugle, *Virginia Taxpayers 1782-1787*, "Introduction."
7. Public Claims, Warwick County (Archives, Virginia State Library).
8. Warwick, Chesterfield County, an industrial center, also filed claims; see Chapter 8, note 17, *ante*.
9. See "Warwicktown," Chapter 3, with notes, *ante*.
10. W. W. Hening, *Statutes at Large*, XIII, 156, 158.
11. *Ibid.*, 478.
12. Warwick County petitions (original) (Archives, Virginia State Library).
13. Available at Newport News Public Library; also see typescript of an address by George Ben West to the "Pioneers of Newport News," 11 May 1911, giving brief account of the countryside and the people before and during the Civil War, available at Main Street Library. West's father, Parker West, owned the farm at Newport News Point at the outbreak of the Civil War.
14. Published in series, weekly.

15. From account of the late Roberta Curtis, daughter of James M. Curtis of Upper Land's End; for shipyard, Mulberry Island area, see will of Thos. Cary Curtis, 1848 (Warwick County Will Book No. 1, pp. 8, 9).
16. See letter of Maj. Robert Morris, Jr., 6th Pennsylvania Cavalry, 8 May 1862 (*Daily Press*, 2 March 1953)
17. *Calendar of Virginia State Papers*, X, 1808-1835, p. 231.
18. Information from the late Miss Betty Curtis of End View.

The Civil War

It was as evident in 1862 as in 1865 . . . that it was on the banks of the James that the fate of the Union was to be decided.¹

— GEORGE B. MCCLELLAN, MAJOR GENERAL, U.S.A.

THE smoke of the guns firing upon Fort Sumter, South Carolina, 12 April 1861,² had scarcely cleared when President Lincoln called for volunteers requesting enlistment for three months. Apparently, he anticipated that the subduing of the seceding southern states would not pose great difficulties to the military. Immediately, reinforcements were sent to strengthen Fort Monroe and at the same time to secure the strategic location at the mouth of the James River — Newport's News.³ Invading federal troops, volunteers for the most part, at once disturbed the peaceful rural scene along the banks of the lower James. Trenches, fortifications and batteries went up on the Parker West land and at Wilbern's where there were freshly planted fields of corn and wheat and grazing acres for stock of all kinds.⁴

The Warwick Beauregards⁵

Before these first Union troops arrived the young men of Warwick began to answer the call for enlistments in the Confederate Army. On 27 May 1861, the Warwick Beauregards were mustered into service by Colonel B. S. Ewell. Commanded by Doctor H. H. Curtis of End View, the contingent became Company H of the 32nd Virginia Infantry Regiment, which was part of Corse's brigade, Pickett's division in the corps of General Longstreet.

On the eve of departure the Company assembled at End View, the home of its Captain, where Mrs. Maria Curtis presented her husband with the Confederate flag, and as "from beauty's hand to valor given," it was graciously accepted. Captain Curtis put his company through their drills and then the bugles sounded. The scene was a touching one as mother bade farewell to son, wife to husband and sweetheart to her swain.⁶

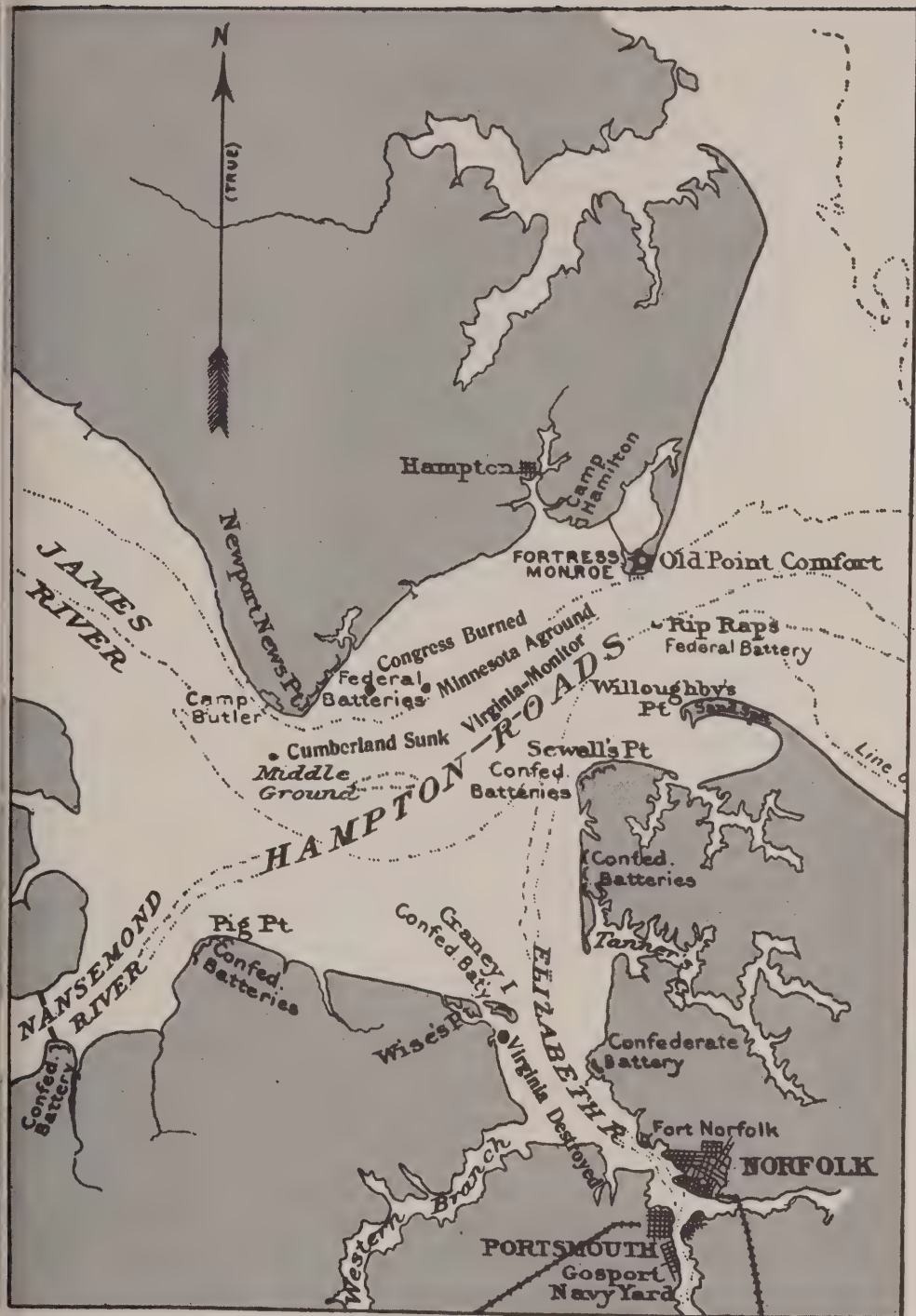
At Appomattox

Company H served valiantly throughout the four years of the war. Baptism in serious fire was in defense of the homeland in the Peninsular Campaign, 1862, whence the men were ordered to withdraw in the defense of Richmond at Seven Pines, Savage's Station and Malvern Hill. The Company participated in nineteen major engagements, and when the last bugle blew at Appomattox, 9 April 1865, the following, having been spared, answered the final Company roll call: J. A. Green, R. G. Curtis, V. W. Nash, S. H. Mallicote, J. G. Burcher, Robert Curtis, J. L. Curtis, Ralph Copeland, William Cox, M. P. Drewey, J. L. Harwood, T. M. Harwood, John Lewelling, F. P. Mallicote, G. L. Moore, E. C. Patrick, D. C. Patrick, James Powell, J. L. Tabb, L. P. Tabb, E. R. Tulley, W. L. Wall. The fate of the others is a matter of record. The death of young Thomas G. H. Curtis, who by 1865 was serving as second Lieutenant of the Company, is a sad but realistic commentary on war. Three days before the surrender at Appomattox, he was killed at Saylor's Creek as Lee's army withdrew, still hoping to elude Grant.⁷

In addition to the ninety names on the roll of the Warwick Beauregards, forty-one of Warwick's sons are listed as having served in other detachments.⁸

General Butler Arrives

General Benjamin F. Butler, whose unsavory reputation is generally known, was sent to command at Old Point. Arriving,



COURTESY, MARINERS MUSEUM

THE BATTLE OF THE IRONCLADS

The Confederate ironclad VIRGINIA was reconstructed from the burned hulk of the steam frigate U.S.S. MERRIMAC at the Navy Yard, Portsmouth, Virginia, 1861-62.

22 May 1861, he found at the base already, in addition to the regular garrison, regiments of New York and Massachusetts volunteers, who had responded to Linclon's call.⁹

Butler lost no time in securing Newport's News. Within five days he sent regiments of the New York and lately arrived Vermont volunteers to occupy the embankment along the lower James. The site was activated as Camp Butler, and the men were ordered at once to throw up earthworks, which had been laid out to extend from about Thirty-Second Street to Newport's News Point.¹⁰

At Camp Butler

With the supply system of the federal forces not yet operating, rations, such as they were, were issued irregularly. Hard tack, sloppy coffee, and fat back, when available, scarcely satisfied the hungry raw recruits. Forthwith, they took advantage of the state of war to pillage and plunder the area. Although orders issued by General Butler forbade foraging and depredations, those orders were lightly regarded, and the men, not under strict military discipline, proceeded with their looting. Not only food, but horses, mules, carts, wagons and even furniture were brought into camp. Human riff-raff that then followed the trails of armies — the jackals of war — also were in evidence, preying on the helpless area and further aggravating the situation for the inhabitants who remained.¹¹

The Point Activated

On 8 June 1861 the two regiments at Camp Butler were joined by a regiment of New York Zouaves in their picturesque uniforms with baggy trousers, short jackets, sashes and white leggings, hardly costumes for what was to come.¹² By this time the earthworks begun at Newport's News had been extended for approximately a mile along the shore. Two wharfs, one built by Robert Bennett, postmaster about 1851, and the other built about 1860 by Parker West, owner of the land at

the Point, were taken over as was a two-story storage building, both at the foot of the present Eighteenth Street.¹³ The federal troops dug three large wells nearby from which water was pumped to the vessels. The storehouse was used by the commissary. As soon as practical facilities were constructed at the Point: a more adequate landing pier, additional warehouses and other buildings. The number of men engaged in the military operation at Newport's News in 1861 is variously estimated to have been between 5,000 and 10,000. The strength of the batteries along the shore was to be effectively tested the following year.¹⁴

On 5 June 1861 Camp Butler witnessed a naval action recorded as having taken place off Newport's News. Pig Point, at the mouth of the Nansemond River, directly across the James River, together with the whole south side including Norfolk and Portsmouth was then in the hands of the Confederates. Unsuccessfully, the *Harriet Lane*, a converted federal steamer, launched an attack upon Pig Point, but was forced to retreat to the protection of the Newport's News batteries.¹⁵

By this time Colonel J. W. Phelps of the Vermont regiment had been placed in command at Newport's News. He was a popular officer, and was said to have been brave, cool and capable.¹⁶ It was he who issued to Captain Nelson Smith of Cedar Grove an official order exempting the latter's plantation from the pillaging of federal troops. The paper, still in possession of descendants, bears evidence that looting was carried on with full knowledge of officers in charge.

The First Fight

With the two strategic points at the lower end of the Peninsula in the hands of Union forces, the intervening area along Hampton Roads was secure to them. Not so the interior, to which Confederates had retreated after the burning of Hampton, July 1861, when word had been received of the intention of the Union forces to occupy the town.

From the area of Big Bethel and Little Bethel, the latter now the site of the Liberty Baptist Church, the Confederates under General Bankhead Magruder, made frequent forays against the Union forces. To bring the annoying attacks to an end and drive the Confederates from a range that gave them easy access to the entrenched position of the federal troops, General Ebenezer W. Peirce was placed in charge of a federal detachment and ordered to proceed to attack both Little Bethel and Big Bethel.¹⁷ Minute plans had been worked out and specific directions were given. Peirce was to lead his detachment from Camp Hamilton, recently established on the Phoebus side of Mill Creek, to a point near Little Bethel. Here a column of men advancing from Camp Butler at Newport's News was to meet him. Together they were to surprise and attack both Bethels, which were in Elizabeth City County three miles apart. Although, in light of later heavy engagements, the conflict at Big Bethel (Little Bethel had been abandoned) is recognized as a minor battle, it was the first contest of the war.

The southerners with a small force of 1408 men completely routed the organized expedition comprised of some 4,400 men. Familiarity with the terrain and experience in the use of small arms gave the southerners a distinct advantage. The federal force moving in the darkness from two positions, mistook one another for the enemy and opened fire, giving the expedition a poor start at the outset.

Invasion of the Peninsula Planned

The contest at Big Bethel and events transpiring elsewhere shortly convinced the federal officials that the reduction of the southern states was not to be the three months' task for which volunteers had been recruited. Following Manasses there was realization that a large and thoroughly organized army must be made available if Washington was to be defended and the war brought to a successful conclusion.¹⁸

To achieve the end in short order, one objective was the capture of Richmond, seat of the Confederate government. Accordingly, a plan was devised to proceed to that objective through the Peninsula lying between the James and the York Rivers. Plans made by the middle of March, after assurances had been given by naval authorities that the newly developed ironclad craft the *Monitor* could hold the Confederate ironclad *Merrimac* in check, called for preliminary use of the bases at Old Point and Newport's News to launch the expedition to be headed by Major General George B. McClellan commanding the Army of the Potomac.¹⁹

*A Naval Sensation*²⁰

Meanwhile on eighth and ninth March 1862, a naval engagement which completely revolutionized the navies of the world, had taken place off Newport's News. No battle ever produced a greater sensation, for overnight, the huge wooden ships carrying from eighty to one hundred and twenty guns, became obsolete. Henceforth, rams and ironclads were to decide in naval warfare.

While the wooden ships of the U. S. Navy, including the *Minnesota*, hovered around Old Point, in the Elizabeth River, abandoned to the Confederates at the outset of the war, a conversion job on the erstwhile U. S. steam frigate *Merrimac* was feverishly underway. With a formidable iron ram at her bow and her superstructure reinforced by timbers a foot thick, over which were fastened iron plates, as the C.S.S. *Virginia*, she was ready for action the morning of 8 March 1862. Steaming out from her base, the cumbersome vessel steered by necessity through the deeper channel straight for Newport's News Point, where under the strongly fortified batteries were anchored the U. S. frigate *Congress*, with fifty guns and the sloop *Cumberland* with thirty guns.

Upon approach of the *Merrimac*, both vessels, together with the shore batteries, opened fire. The pelting shot rolled off the

sloping decks of the ironclad like rain off a tin roof. Reserving her fire and attack until she was within easy range of the *Cumberland*, the *Merrimac* also made use of her ram, and in short order opened a hole in the side of the *Cumberland* through which a cart and horse might be driven. Slowly, the beleaguered vessel began to sink. The *Congress* continued the fight alone, but finally was forced to surrender in the unequal contest.

Meanwhile, three frigates protecting Old Point got under way. The *Minnesota*, taking the shore channel between Old Point and Newport's News, grounded, and was in a position to be engaged by the *Merrimac*. By then, however, night was drawing on and the tide ebbing, so the *Merrimac* retired to the Elizabeth River with plans to dispatch the *Minnesota* the next morning.

At daylight, on the morning of 9 March, a strange craft stood in the channel between Seawell's Point and Newport's News, protecting the *Minnesota*. The U. S. naval vessel *Monitor* was ready to test under fire her radical design. On her ironclad deck which was practically awash, a cheese box structure with a revolving turret housed guns. In the fight that ensued the *Monitor* proved a match for the *Merrimac*, whose deep draft, old engines and unwieldy structure made her difficult to maneuver. Even so, the result of the engagement, which so startled the world, was a draw, the *Monitor* being the first to withdraw without having scored a single seriously disabling shot against her antagonist.

The Fate of the Ironclads

In April 1862, when the Confederates had evacuated Norfolk to concentrate forces for the protection of Richmond against McClellan's advancing army, decision was reached to send the *Merrimac* up the James to aid in the defense of Richmond. Then, a west wind bringing a series of low tides dictated the fate of the ironclad. Since the pilots were unable to maneuver

the ship at any distance from the Newport's News shore batteries and beyond, Commander Tatnall chose the only alternative and had the historic ship destroyed off Craney Island in Elizabeth River.²¹

With the *Merrimac* out of the way, the *Monitor* moved up the James River to give support to McClellan. After withdrawal of the Army of the Potomac from the James without having achieved the capture of Richmond, the *Monitor* was ordered to Beaufort, North Carolina. While being towed there, she went down, 30 December 1862, in a gale off Cape Hatteras.²²

McClellan's Forces March

Major General George B. McClellan, commanding the Army of the Potomac which was to march on Richmond and capture the seat of the Confederate government, had arrived at Old Point, the second of April to initiate the military operation through the Peninsula. He found at Fort Monroe five divisions of infantry, a brigade of regulars, two regiments of cavalry and a portion of reserve artillery already disembarked. Major General Silas Casey's division was at Newport's News. Although plans on paper anticipated an immediate start, the troops moving from Fort Monroe and Newport's News simultaneously, the lack of transportation to haul baggage and supplies delayed the start. Casey's division lacked wagons and had to be held at Newport's News until the sixteenth of April, while the divisions from Old Point got under way on the fourth of April.²³

The force advancing from Camp Butler at Newport's News Point had been routed via Warwick Road, the present route sixty, to traverse the entire length of the present city of Newport News.²⁴ They were to rendezvous at the Half-Way House, beyond the Warwick County line, with the force routed through Hampton and Yorktown.²⁵

The Populace Flees

As word of the impending march spread, the populace, which had remained in the area, began to gather such possessions as they could carry in wagons, carts and family surreys and flee ahead of the invading army. The Peninsula was almost deserted, the people abandoning their homes to seek refuge first in Richmond, then beyond or to North Carolina.²⁶

Among the homes and outbuildings destroyed as the army moved onward were those of William Lee, which stood near the river just beyond Sixty-Fourth Street and those of Armistead Haughton at Fifty-Seventh Street.²⁷

The Parker West family was caught at their home within the federal lines at Newport's News Point. Later Mr. West, his wife, three daughters, a son-in-law, a little granddaughter, with a relative, Mrs. Susan Watson, the cook and house servants were allowed to leave the area.²⁸

The family of Captain Nelson Smith, a British subject, remained at Cedar Grove.²⁹ His wife Margaret (Douglas) was from New York. It was she who assumed the role of councillor and physician in the beleaguered county. Some few persons were left in the area. Either they had no means of going elsewhere or they preferred to meet their fate whatever it might be. Numerous Negro families by necessity remained on the land. There was no doctor in the area to minister to the ill. With her little black bag filled with home remedies, Mrs. Smith drove about the county in her horse-drawn buggy, ministering to all who needed care and comfort. Sometimes she stood at the grave repeating a last few words in a burial service for the departed.

The Scene on Warwick Road

Several descriptions of the march of Casey's division up the Peninsula are extant. Six weeks later, on 31 May 1862, this division was to bear the brunt of the initial phase of the battle of

Seven Pines near Richmond.³⁰ But when the march began the early spring had brought rain as well as intermittent sunshine. The tramping soldiers heavily loaded with their personal equipment plunged through the muddy road under a warm April sun. The wagons of the baggage train, from time to time, became mired and it took all the persuasiveness of the experienced though exasperated Negro mule drivers to get a team of some six or eight mules to pull together sufficiently to lift out of the mud wheels embedded up to the axles.³¹ The five or six miles march as far as Cedar Lane proved a warm, burdensome journey. By then, the soldiers had begun to lighten their packs, dropping their possessions as they went along. The road was strewn with coats, jackets, shoes, pants, blankets and equipment of all sorts, most of which could be found along the road further on, when wanted.³²

Doug Smith, for many years Clerk of Courts in Newport News, the son of Captain Nelson Smith, was at the time a small boy six or seven years old. He sat on the fence at the foot of Cedar Lane to watch the marching division go by.³³ What he recovered in the way of dropped equipment is not a matter of record, but a small boy was not likely to leave the scene empty handed when so much was discarded within sight.

Delaying Tactics

In this early phase of the war, the Confederate General Joseph E. Johnston was in command of the Department of the Peninsula and Norfolk. In the protection of Richmond, the strategy had been outlined. No actual stand was to be made until the Union army neared Richmond, but the Confederates were to engage in delaying tactics and hamper McClellan's progress by engagements at various points along the eighty-mile route.³⁴ In this, the southerners had able allies in the muddy roads and streams swollen by spring rains.

The first of the entrenchments that the federal forces encountered were at Young's Mill.³⁵ Here the Confederates not

only had planted their batteries to sweep the road, but had driven piles with sharpened ends across the road. Log cabins had been built there for barracks. As Casey's division approached, the southerners withdrew behind a more securely entrenched position at Lee's Mill.

Warwick's County Court Records

By evening, 18 April 1862, the division marching up the Warwick Road had reached Warwick Court House. A description of the march, of conditions, and of the buildings at Warwick Court House is given in a letter of a young federal soldier written to his brother and dated Camp-in-the-Wilderness.³⁶ The letter describes the very small court house, used in later years as the clerk's office, and other buildings, including a jail. In a very small office, the soldier recorded, were housed the county court records. Although a guard was stationed over them, the writer said he got a handful of deeds, wills and orders, one dated 1669, and he enclosed these records with the letter to his brother. "Shortly after I got mine a stop was put to taking any more," he wrote.

Fragments of the records snatched by the Union soldiers now constitute a substantial portion of the very limited collection of pre-Civil War Warwick County court documents. Two groups of papers in the original were returned in 1914 to Virginia from Philadelphia, Pennsylvania and Hasbrouck Heights, New Jersey. Another set purchased in 1938 from a possessor in Norwich, Connecticut, repose in the archives of the Library of the College of William and Mary. Photostats of other Warwick County records located in Wilkes Barre, Pennsylvania, together with photostats of the letter of the Union soldier, aforementioned, are deposited both in the archives of the Library of the College of William and Mary and the archives of the Virginia State Library.³⁷ In 1901, a U. S. army officer, son of a Union soldier, sent from Groton, Massachusetts to the Virginia Historical Society sixteen or so fragments of Warwick County

court papers. These include an account of the issuance of county muskets to twenty-one persons in 1690.

It is not thought that *all* of the Warwick County court records prior to the Civil War were thus scattered. At the 1863-64 session of the General Assembly a bill was enrolled for preservation of records of Warwick County.³⁸ While no entry is extant regarding their removal, the probability is that Warwick's records, not taken by the federal soldiers, were reposing in the archives in Richmond in 1865, and were burned in the general conflagrations when Richmond was evacuated before Grant's invading army.

At Lee's Mill

While the Union forces met little opposition at Young's Mill, they encountered stiff resistance at Lee's Mill, an entrenchment in a line of fortifications across the Peninsula.³⁹ There the Confederates opened the dam in an effort to flood the Peninsular neck and seriously delay the onward march of the federal army. A bloody fight took place at Dam No. 1. Wounded Union soldiers were carried to End View and there on the lawn under the shade of the trees and in the office of Doctor Curtis, who had headed the Warwick Beauregards, these men were cared for by Mrs. Maria Curtis.

Union Headquarters at End View

Forthwith, the commander of the Union forces took over End View for his headquarters and Mrs. Curtis and children were accorded the use of one room. So precarious was the situation for three weeks that the Negro carriage driver kept the horses harnessed ready to go. Hesitating to leave her home, Mrs. Curtis delayed, but finally gathered a few possessions, and with her children set out for Williamsburg. But as the armies approached and the Confederates took another stand, she was forced to take refuge in North Carolina. Upon her departure from End View Mrs. Curtis left the home in the care of the old

Negro nurse and she was told that if the family never returned the place was hers. It was she who stopped the Union soldiers from burning End View.⁴⁰

The Confederate entrenchments on the lawn adjacent to the home of Richard Decauter Lee, well known as Lee Hall, still remain and there, also, the wounded were cared for during the intense fighting that took place at the upper end of the county.

The Confederates Withdraw

Even so, the fighting covered in part the retreat of the Confederate forces who by the fourth of May abandoned also their position at Yorktown, withdrawing, as was planned, towards Richmond as they took another stand at Williamsburg.⁴¹

As the second year of the war came to an end, Warwick had been invaded from Hampton Roads to the county line at Skiffe's Creek. Swept almost clean of inhabitants, stock, produce and possessions with many homes burnt, others pillaged, others in the hands of squatters, the area reflected truly the desolation of war.

The Fate of the Union

Even before the war came to an end, families had gradually begun to find their way back to the Peninsula and to their ravaged homes and farms. Meanwhile, the shifting theater of war had moved again to the banks of the James River, at the falls. Federal forces under General Ulysses S. Grant began to close in on Richmond. Upon the advice of General Lee that he could not hold that city, President Jefferson Davis and his cabinet abandoned the seat of the Confederacy, as Richmond went up in flames. Thus, the fate of the Union *was* decided in the ruins of the Capital overlooking the upper James River, and on 9 April 1865, at Appomattox, not far distant, General Lee laid down his arms.

Prisoners of War

Final activity at Newport's News came after the surrender, when the site of the federal base activated May 1861, was approved by General Ulysses Grant as a place for holding prisoners of war.⁴² Originally, General W. Hoffman estimated that 10,000 to 20,000 men would be sent and that two regiments would be required to furnish guards. The records show that a maximum of 3,434 prisoners were at Newport's News at any one time. They began to arrive immediately after the capitulation and were held at the camp the remainder of April and during May and June. By 5 July the depot was practically empty, and was deactivated by 2 August 1865.

The prison enclosure embraced twenty-five acres and was surrounded by a fence twelve feet high, inside of which there was a railing twenty feet from the fence. Prisoners were not allowed beyond the railing. Sentinels were stationed on a gallery erected beyond the fence. Within the encampment there was a hospital for the sick and wounded. Sanitary facilities were primitive.

A final indignity imposed at Newport's News upon the southerners was their subjection to Negro troops assigned as guards. To the credit of the federal prisoner-of-war bureau, however, acknowledgement must be made that the men were released from the depot within a reasonable period. Notwithstanding tensions in the encampment and conditions, by no means ideal, only twelve escapes were reported. In full, there was a sick list of 420 men, while 168 died as prisoners of war.

NOTES

1. *Battles and Leaders of the Civil War* (The Century Co., 1884), II, 187.
2. Fort Sumter, under command of Maj. Robert Anderson, U.S.A., of Kentucky, capitulated to forces under Gen. G. T. Beauregard, C.S.A., 13 April 1861. *Ibid.*, I, 79.

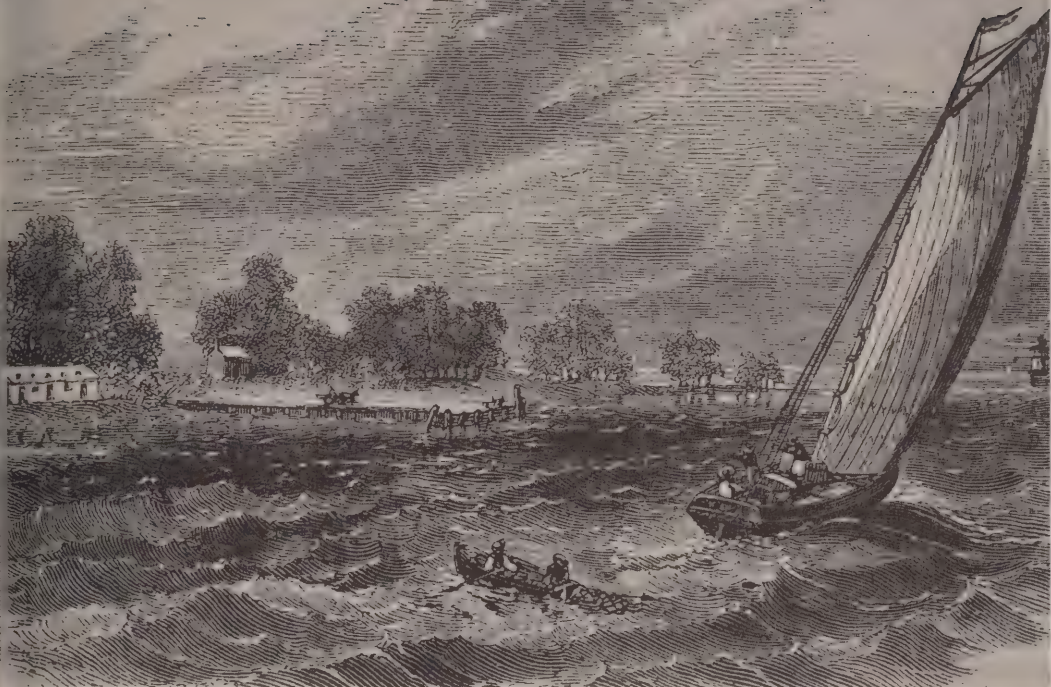
3. *Ibid.*, II, 144; see West address, *ante*, Chapter 9, note 13; federal forces landed 27 May 1861.
4. *Daily Press*, 25 October 1959, see Matthew Fulgham, "City Center Divided by Camp Trenches."
5. From typescript of official list deposited in office of Clerk of Courts No. 2, Newport News.
6. Account from family records supplied by the late Miss Betty Curtis of End View.
7. *Ante*, note 5.
8. *Ibid.*
9. *Battles and Leaders of the Civil War* (The Century Co., 1884), II, 144.
10. *Ante*, note 4.
11. *Ibid.*
12. *Ibid.*
13. George Ben West, "Address to the Pioneers," 1911.
14. *Post*, "A Naval Sensation."
15. *Ante*, note 4.
16. *Battles and Leaders of the Civil War* (The Century Co., 1884), II, 147.
17. *Ibid.*, 148-151.
18. *Ibid.*, 161.
19. *Ibid.*, 167, 168.
20. *Ibid.*, I, 692, *et seq.*
21. *Ibid.*, 710.
22. S. B. Besse, *U. S. Ironclad Monitor With Data and References for a Scale Model* (Mariners Museum, 1936).
23. *Battles and Leaders of the Civil War*, II, 168, 169; also, map, p. 188.
24. Letter of Union soldier, 18 April 1862, *post*, notes 36 and 37.
25. *Battles and Leaders of the Civil War* (The Century Co., 1884), II, 169, 170.
26. George Ben West, "Address to the Pioneers," 1911.
27. Will of William Lee (4 September 1861), codicil, 17 November 1862, recites "since will drawn the invading army of the U. S. has destroyed the houses on my home farm." Warwick County Court Records, Will Book 1, p. 10, Clerk of Courts Office No. 1, Newport News.
28. George B. West, "Address to the Pioneers" (typescript).
29. See article on Cedar Grove, *Daily Press*, 15 March 1931, p. 29.
30. *Battles and Leaders of the Civil War* (The Century Co., 1884), II, 171, 178, 231, 233.
31. *Ibid.*, 189, 190, 429.
32. Letter of Union soldier, 18 April 1862, *post*.

33. *Ante*, note 29.
34. *Battles and Leaders of the Civil War* (The Century Co., 1884), II, 221.
35. *Ibid.*, II, 169; also, Benson J. Lossing, *Pictorial History of the Civil War in the United States of America*, II, 372, 373.
36. Loose papers Warwick County (Archives, Virginia State Library).
37. See photostats and list of available Warwick County records in Archives, Virginia State Library.
38. John W. Williams, *Index to Enrolled Bills, 1776-1910* (Virginia General Assembly), p. 184.
39. *Battles and Leaders of the Civil War* (The Century Co., 1884, II, 169, 188, 194.
40. Account by the late Miss Betty Curtis of End View.
41. *Battles and Leaders of the Civil War* (The Century Co., 1884), II, 194, 198, 199.
42. Matthew Fulgham, "War Prisoners in Compound Here After Conflict Ended," *Daily Press*, 15 November 1959.

P A R T

2

Industrialization



COURTESY, THE MARINERS MUSEUM

Newport's News Point, May 1859, as recorded by a woodcut artist in HARPER'S MONTHLY MAGAZINE. Here Camp Butler was activated, 27 May 1861.



COURTESY, NEWPORT NEWS PUBLIC LIBRARY

Overlooking the James River at foot of 25th Street, 1907. River steamers at Pier A; steam vessels and sailing craft in the harbor awaiting cargoes; Casino building on the bluff.

Reconstruction and Rebirth

THE period immediately following the Civil War was one of reconstruction. The odium attached to the term reflects the hardships and oppression suffered by the people of the South. The war had been terrible but the reconstruction period was worse. In Warwick it completed the economic and social upheaval initiated by the invasion of 1862.

Land Owners Lose

Virginia was designated U. S. Military District No. 1. The Southerners, having taken up arms against the Union, were disfranchised.¹ As the natives could neither vote nor hold office, the government, both local and state, fell into the hands of unscrupulous persons, many of whom had invaded the area to take advantage of the prostration of the people.² The people of Warwick, as elsewhere throughout the South, became the victims of the avaricious, who flocked below the Mason and Dixon line with the idea of enriching themselves at the expense of land owners, whom the misfortunes of war and its aftermath had made almost penniless.

Confederate currency, greatly depreciated in value as the war turned against the South, was worthless after the surrender. Those who owned property not only had to mortgage it but they were generally called upon by less fortunate friends and relatives to become security on bonds.³ Financial involvement and embarrassment was the consequence, and in the end, loss for the heavily indebted land owners was inevitable.

Military Courts

There was no civil law in Warwick following the war. According to an account left by George Ben West, son of Parker West, the Freedman's Bureau, established to look to the interests of the lately freed Negroes, conducted the courts. The

Captain stationed at Newport's News tried trivial cases between Negroes. Cases between Negroes and whites were tried by Captain Wilder who held court in the Tabb house in Hampton.⁴

Family Suffering

The experiences of the Parker West family and the William Lee family were typical in the county, the same woeful experiences being repeated over and over. When the Parker West family returned to the area, having fled in 1862 before the military invaders, they found destruction everywhere, with the farm at Newport's News Point in danger of being sold for taxes. Finally, the family moved in a storehouse, still standing, only to be evicted a year later by the U. S. Marshall. Then, Parker West, on security for bonds for a number of persons was sued. In the meantime, he went blind and in 1871 he died from worry.⁵ Some thirty-two acres of his large land holdings eventually remained in the name of his son, George Ben West, who many years later became one of the founders of the Citizens and Marine Bank, identified today as the Citizens and Marine Jefferson Bank.

William Lee, a man of extraordinary business sagacity, energy and ability, had amassed something of a fortune measured by standards of the period. With his family he lived comfortably on a farm fronting along the James River north of Sixty-Second Street. He owned considerable acreage in addition, extending to the present Rivermont and southward to Forty-Fourth Street. His home and those of his sons were destroyed during the war. William Lee did not long survive the invasion of his homeland.⁶ He died in 1863. The war reduced the family to poverty and their only recourse was to surrender the lands their father had acquired.⁷ Some of them went for forty dollars an acre.

Even though Virginia was readmitted to the Union, 26 January 1870, trouble did not cease. By then the "carpet baggers" and the Negroes were in control and it was exceedingly difficult to dislodge them.

Potentialities of the Harbor Envisioned

But, out of a chance visit of a young man many years earlier and upon the ashes of War and out of the sorrows and distress of Reconstruction, a better day was dawning for the Peninsula. In 1837, Collis P. Huntington, then a young man sixteen years of age, who began his career as an itinerant salesman, visited Newport's News.⁸ He is said then, to have "spotted" the location as one "ideal for enterprise." He kept the site in mind and immediately after the cessation of war, by then, having become a man of importance and means, he sent his agents into the area to investigate the harbor as a possible site for the terminus of a railroad he projected to complete his transcontinental line. They too, wondered that a place "so designed and adapted by nature" for enterprise had remained so long undeveloped.

Land Acquired

With the backing of Collis P. Huntington, the men at once began to acquire the land in the area, which the heavily indebted owners could not afford to cultivate, nor indeed longer to own.

Numerous transfers of deeds show that erstwhile farm lands on the Peninsula were conveyed by 1866 to one Calvin Giddings from Erie County, Ohio.⁹ These transfers included the William Lee holdings, the Armistead Haughton farm between Fifty-Sixth and Sixtieth Streets, the Robert H. Lee tract between Thirty-Sixth and Forty-Fourth Streets, and in 1867 the Wilbern farm.¹⁰ Between 1873 and 1880 the Thomas W. Lee farm between Forty-Fourth and Fifty-Third Streets was acquired by the Huntington interests, and in 1867, three hundred acres of Briarfield fronting on the James River was sold to one E. S. Hamlin.¹¹ Other tracts, except the Hawkins-Melson and Disney-on-the-Roads (fronting on Hampton Roads) subsequently were acquired. On the basis of this acquisition, the old city of Newport News was to be built.

Aspinwall Projects a Canal

Meanwhile, another group of northern financiers had become interested in the Peninsula. William H. Aspinwall and associates, who were canal builders and operators of clipper ships, conceived Richmond as a leading port for the middle section of the Atlantic coast. Flour milled in that area could withstand tropical heat in shipment to South America. Thus, they proposed to transport flour south from Richmond and bring back cargoes of coffee. In order to shorten the route by hours, they projected a main water route through the lower York and planned a canal connecting the York with the James, to be built through the narrowest portion of the Peninsula, using the Lee Hall lake and other waterways. They planned to develop Yorktown as a city and leave out entirely the area at the mouth of the James.¹²

Accordingly, Aspinwall and his associates made large land purchases in the upper part of Warwick County¹³ and around Williamsburg in adjacent James City County. Among their purchases was the site of the old colonial capitol, later deeded to the Association for Preservation of Virginia Antiquities and by them to the Williamsburg Restoration.

When the Aspinwall plan failed to materialize due largely to objections on the part of Collis P. Huntington, A. A. Low and Harvey Fisk, the latter two also New York financiers, the Huntington interests acquired the Aspinwall holdings, which were transferred to the Old Dominion Land Company, 1880.

In objecting to the plan to by-pass the harbor at Newport's News and develop a city at Yorktown, Huntington had declared that he never knew a city to be developed successfully except and upon the north and east bank of a river. His foresight prevailed. However, some difficult and involved negotiations for land at the Point preceded the final selection of the site.

NOTES

1. Virginia seceded from the Union 17 April 1861 and subsequently became the chief battleground of the war.
2. Those flocking to the South after the war were called "carpet-baggers" from the traveling bags which they carried and which were said to hold all of their worldly possessions.
3. W. T. Stauffer, "Newport News Got Its Start with the Coming of the Railroad," *Daily Press*, 14 May 1939, Sec. E, p. 1; both Confederate currency and unredeemed Confederate bonds are now preserved as relics (see item No. 20292, Archives, Virginia State Library).
4. Stauffer article, *ibid.*
5. *Ibid.*
6. *Ante*, Chapter 9, note 27.
7. See option, 1 January 1867, executed between Calvin Giddings of Erie County, Ohio, and R. H. Lee, son of William Lee, Warwick County Court Records, Book 1, pp. 13, 54, 560 (Office Clerk of Courts No. 1, Newport News).
8. Cerinda W. Evans, *Collis Potter Huntington*, II, 562.
9. Calvin Giddings was the agent of Collis P. Huntington. He died before 1880 and his executors, Edwin Giddings and Chauncey Giddings and his wife Mary Giddings conveyed to Huntington title to land held in Giddings' name (Warwick County Court Records, Book 1, pp. 551-553, 555, Office of Clerk of Courts No. 1, Newport News); also see W. T. Stauffer, "The Old Farms," *Daily Press*, March 1934, series of weekly articles.
10. *Ibid.*; also see William Wilbern to Calvin Giddings of Erie County, Ohio, contract 20 March 1866 to sell 100 acres s. by Burks, w. by the River, n. by Hawkins for "\$6000 in gold" (the Casino grounds were laid out on a portion of this tract); contract to be fulfilled 4 July 1867, was executed 29 July 1867 (Warwick County Court Records, Book 1, pp. 13, 14, Office of Clerk of Courts No. 1, Newport News).
11. Also an agent of Collis P. Huntington; Briarfield extended a mile or more into Elizabeth City County.
12. Information from Walter B. Livezey, president of the Old Dominion Land Co., in interview March 1937; also see *Times-Herald*, 8 April 1937, supplement, pp. 1, 14.
13. *Ibid.*, also see sale of land by Richard Decauter Lee and wife Martha to Wm. Aspinwall, October 1871 (Warwick County Deed Book 1, p. 240, Office of Clerk of Courts No. 1, Newport News; for description of land see suit, Seabourn's executors vs. Lee *et als.*, Elizabeth City County Court Records, 25 September 1866).

The Port Created

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*The point now called Newport's News has been selected as the eastern deep water terminus of the great Chesapeake and Ohio Railroad. . . . Nowhere on the four continents is there a more magnificent expanse of land-locked water than this Hampton Roads in which the navies of the world might ride at their moorings, the largest ships of all the oceans may come and go at pleasure without waiting for flood tide to insure sufficient depths of water.*¹— SCRIBNER'S MONTHLY, December 1872.

.....

DECISION had been reached in 1868 to extend to deep water the tracks of the Chesapeake and Ohio Railroad Company, a successor to the Virginia Central and the Covington and Ohio Railroads. The plan endorsed by Collis P. Huntington had under consideration several locations near the Chesapeake Bay. These were: West Point at the juncture of the Pamunkey and the Mattaponi Rivers, the mouth of the Pianketank, Yorktown, Newport's News and Norfolk.²

Advantages of the Site

The committee sent to survey the several locations were of the opinion that Huntington had already chosen Newport's News, both because of an unrivaled harbor and as there was no competing railway line on the Peninsula. Huntington's estimate of the advantages of Newport's News were confirmed by a naval officer, assisting in the survey. He declared that the site possessed "all the advantages of New York harbor with the additional ones of a safer approach from the sea, easier entrance and greater freedom from fogs and ice."³

The Acre

Notwithstanding Mr. Huntington's vision some of his associates were dubious, describing the area as a "tract crossed by

cow paths." In reply, Huntington confidently retorted that the land he was purchasing was the "*best half-acre in the world*."⁴ This reference probably was the origin of the early designation of the tract immediately adjacent to the Chesapeake and Ohio as the "Acre." Later when the town was laid out in streets and the "Acre" became the habitat of a rough element, it was known as "Hell's Half Acre."

Delay and Complications

Survey for the Chesapeake and Ohio extension from Richmond was begun in 1873. That year a nationwide depression set in and plans had to be delayed, following which a reorganization of the railway company took place in 1878.

Then, the preference for Newport's News as a terminus was further complicated as the desired land at the Point was held by speculators who set what the promoters of the railroad considered an unreasonable price. After many negotiations, E. C. Hamlin got an option to buy all the tracts at \$300 an acre except one held by the Kimberly, Groome, Whitehead-Tucker interests and the West tract.⁵ These were acquired sometime later, while George Ben West, son of Parker West, gave ten acres of his land in consideration of the railroad's coming. Huntington's representatives then paid \$8,000 for the possible interest of the Parker West heirs in the area.⁶ Adjacent land, since also acquired by the railway, still remained in private ownership.

Harbor Designed by Nature

The last obstacle now was cleared, and in his annual report of September 1880, Collis P. Huntington announced completion of negotiations and a final decision as to the location of the terminus, outlining the advantages of the harbor at Newport's News in the following words:⁷

This is a point so designed and adapted by nature that it will require comparatively little at the hands of man to fit it for our purposes. The

roadstead, well known to all maritime circles, is large enough to float the ocean commerce of the world; it is easily approached in all winds and weather without pilot or tow; it is never troubled by ice and there is enough depth of water to float any ship that sails the seas; and at the same time it is so sheltered that vessels can lie there in perfect safety at all times of the year.

The Railroad in Operation

In 1881, at the celebration of the one hundredth anniversary of the surrender of Cornwallis at Yorktown, a temporary track was extended from the Lee Hall main line to Yorktown to care for the crowds expected to attend the event. On 14 October 1881, the first locomotive transported on a schooner, arrived in Newport's News and ran over the track to Williamsburg, where it was halted at the capitol grounds. On 19 October 1881, a train left Newport's News carrying passengers to Yorktown. Some of these had arrived from Norfolk aboard the *Ariel* of the Virginia Navigation Company, which was the first steamboat to connect across Hampton Roads with the Chesapeake and Ohio Railway.⁸ The departure from Newport's News to Yorktown aboard the train was an event on the Peninsula comparable to the importance of the Yorktown celebration.

Port Facilities

By 1 May 1882, the line was in a state of completion and the first through train to Newport's News began operation. Meanwhile, construction of wharves and terminal buildings for handling general freight and coal at Newport's News was under way.⁹ "A coal pier of novel and ingenious design 825 feet long and 50 feet wide to accommodate six vessels," alongside, delivered coal from twelve chutes operating simultaneously. This operation highly efficient in 1882 is a pigmy structure beside the modern \$8,000,000 coal pier at Newport News, delivering a carload of coal into the hold of a ship every three minutes. Two additional piers with the most modern loading devices



COURTESY OF THE CHESAPEAKE AND OHIO RAILWAY COMPANY

Newport News Point, 1960, showing the Chesapeake and Ohio Railway terminals at the confluence of the James River and Hampton Roads.



serve ships carrying millions of tons of coal in foreign and coast-wise trade. Also the port now possesses the world's most modern ore unloader capable of transferring to a belt conveyor or to train cars eighteen tons of ore every forty-five seconds. On the merchandise piers, recessed tracks run the full length, so that cargoes may be rapidly transferred from car to ship and vice versa.¹⁰

Anticipating a large grain export business from the middle west, grain elevator "A" with a capacity of 1,500,000 bushels was erected in 1882 and, in 1899, elevator "B" was built at the head of Pier 8.¹¹ Elevator "A" was burned in a spectacular fire in 1915 and in 1934 elevator "B" was destroyed.

The Virginia

On 4 June 1950, the pleasant and picturesque passenger service via steamer across Hampton Roads to Norfolk was discontinued in favor of busses routed via the James River bridge and, now using the modern Hampton Roads tunnel. The familiar *Virginia*, with her trail of black smoke, inevitably on time, gliding gracefully into her birth, had been retired from service, 22 September 1949. She was succeeded for the short period by the *Wauketa*. The hour's run across the harbor, always a pleasurable trip for natives, had been a revealing and oftentimes unforgettable experience for those living inland.

Local Service

Of the five railway stations established in Warwick County by the Chesapeake and Ohio, all but two have been abandoned. These are at the Newport News terminal and at Lee Hall in the upper part of the present city, the latter now serving the large military transportation post, Fort Eustis. The trains no longer stop at Oriana, serving the Denbigh area, Oyster Point, serving Menchville, nor at Morrison, originally Gum Grove, renamed for Captain J. S. Morrison, chief engineer in charge of

running the Chesapeake and Ohio railroad tracks from Lee Hall to the terminus.

Harbor Plans Modified

The foresight of Collis P. Huntington in establishing a terminus at Newport's News and building a town there was of inestimable service to the nation, as will be shown hereafter in an account of the use of the port in time of war. Yet, notwithstanding Collis P. Huntington's admirable vision and his ability to carry through the developments which he projected, the ultimate objective in his mind had to be modified.¹² His associates would not go all the way to create the port which he had in mind. A direct line serving the continent from San Francisco to Newport's News, Huntington's dream, would have been one of the factors in the creation of the terminus at Newport's News as the main port on the Atlantic coast.

*The Newport News and Mississippi Valley Company*¹³

An initial step in Huntington's ambitious undertaking had been the formation of two railroad holding companies for control and operation of railways west and east of the Mississippi. Both companies were chartered in 1884, the Southern Pacific Company under legislative enactment in the state of Kentucky for operation of roads west. The Newport News and Mississippi Valley Company, under charter granted in Connecticut, authorized control and operation of the Chesapeake and Ohio; the Elizabethtown, Lexington and Big Sandy; the Chesapeake, Ohio and Southwestern; "and any such other associate railroads as might be built or acquired."

By long term leases varying from between 50 to 250 years entered into February and July 1886 with the roads named above, Collis P. Huntington accomplished a direct line between Newport News and the Mississippi Valley. Connections reaching to the Pacific were assured through Huntington's control of

lines under the South Pacific Company. A steamship line operating between Liverpool, England, and Newport News projected a bristling business for the transcontinental system, and also exceedingly encouraging prospects for the commercial development of the port at Newport News.

Political and economic events through the decade, 1878-1888, attended by financial difficulties of individual railroads, interposed to thwart the plans made by Huntington. A general reorganization of 1888 brought about the separation of the railroads under control of the Newport News and Mississippi Valley Company. The Chesapeake, Ohio and Southwestern, the last link in the eastern railroad system, was sold under foreclosure by 10 November 1893. Actually, for less than two years the Newport News and Mississippi Valley Company was in control of the lines essential for developing the system Huntington had conceived. Powerful interests operating in New York were responsible for diverting to New Orleans the line which Huntington had projected. Thus, Newport's News was removed as an immediate, potential rival to the port of New York.

NOTES

1. Cerinda W. Evans, *Collis Potter Huntington*, II, 548.
2. *Ibid.*, 546.
3. *Ibid.*, 547.
4. *Ibid.*
5. W. T. Stauffer article, *Daily Press*, 14 May 1939, Sec. E, p. 1.
6. *Daily Press*, 16 Jan. 1936, p. 10.
7. Cerinda W. Evans, *Collis Potter Huntington*, II, 549.
8. *Ibid.*, 551-553.
9. *Ibid.*, 554-555.
10. *Daily Press*, 21 February 1960, Sec. F.
11. Cerinda W. Evans, *Collis Potter Huntington*, II, 556.
12. *Ibid.*, 585, 586.
13. *Ibid.*, 559, 576, 578-581, 582-586.

The Town Laid Out

Old Dominion Land Company Organized

WHEN Newport's News was assured as the terminus of the Chesapeake and Ohio, the creation of a town was projected. Accordingly, the Old Dominion Land Company was organized, 19 October 1880, to take over purchases and options on land acquired by the Huntington interests. The first office of the Company was established, 1881, in a small building erected under a live oak tree on the south side of Twenty-Fifth Street, not far distant from the Warwick Hotel.¹ By then, title to practically all of the land on which the projected town was to be laid out on the high banks of the James River had been vested in the Company.

Streets Designated

With the influx of people to the area drawn by opportunities for work, the town's cradle on the "Acre" no longer was adequate. Under the direction of the Land Company, a town was laid out beginning at the Point with numbered streets running east and west and the avenues north and south. As the Yorktown Centennial was imminent the two principal avenues were named for the most prominent generals, Washington and Lafayette (now Huntington). The latter was projected as the main thoroughfare, but as a first street car line later was laid on Washington Avenue, that became the principal street.² West Avenue probably had its name from the direction it faces. Unfortunately the land for residential purposes was divided into twenty-five foot lots, probably in part to lower the cost of anticipated utility lines.

Hotels

The Lafayette House, a brick structure opened June 1881 at the corner of Lafayette Avenue and Twenty-Seventh Street, was

the first hotel in Newport's News. Later the building was adapted to serve as the first hospital in Newport's News,³ and subsequently was used as a boy's military academy.

Construction of the Warwick Hotel was begun in 1882. Opened on 11 April 1883, it was considered one of the most modern hostelries in the country.⁴ A park directly in front of the building stretched to the river, from which projected a pleasure pier used also for the landing of small boats, which could be moored in a protected harbor sheltered by a breakwater.

*Casino Park*⁵

In connection with the hotel, the Casino Park was laid out and developed on the high banks of the James River extending between Twenty-Fifth and Thirtieth Streets. An avenue of tall cottonwoods led to the ample Casino building, a rendezvous for summer visitors, who were attracted to the area by the splendid recreational facilities. In the building were held balls and other entertainments for hotel guests and the populace of the growing town. Excursions were run from Richmond and below, and the park grounds were frequently in use by picnic parties.

Near the Casino building was a commodious bowling alley. On the shore a row of bath houses and a bathing pier provided facilities for the public who daily, in the late afternoons particularly, enjoyed swimming in the then unpolluted waters of the James River.

Bicycling soon became a popular pastime and a path circling the Casino grounds was filled every summer afternoon with young and mature persons not only exercising but greeting friends as they rode in pairs around and around the pleasant park swept by the sea breezes. The only remains today of the once popular park is the small stretch of land fronting the river between Twenty-Sixth and Twenty-Eighth Streets renamed Christopher Newport Park.

Homes

The first homes erected in the newly laid out area were the attached brick dwellings in the three hundred block on Twenty-Seventh Street, since torn down to accommodate the present up-to-date Sears store. A brick row of fifteen houses built on Twenty-Eighth Street for Shipyard officials was called "quality row." Later, a less pretentious row of frame houses went up and was known as "poverty row."

Union Chapel

A Union Chapel for religious worship was erected 1880, on Twenty-Second Street near West Avenue for use by all denominations, and first services were held, March 1881.⁶ As denominational preference developed among the growing worshipers, groups began to erect separate buildings for services.

Denominational Churches

The Newport News Baptist congregation was constituted, 14 June 1883 with twelve members. The first addition to the congregation came exactly six months later when Miss Mary Clayton was baptised in the James River in front of George B. West's residence just below the present Chesapeake and Ohio pier 7. The first church was a small frame building erected at the cost of \$900 on leased land on the west side of Washington Avenue just north of Thirtieth Street. On 27 June 1888, the building committee of the church accepted a gift of five lots on the northwest corner of Washington Avenue and Twenty-Ninth Street, this gift made possible largely through the interest of I. E. Gates, brother-in-law of Collis P. Huntington. A lecture room of brick construction was erected, 1890, on the lot facing Twenty-Ninth Street, and this served the congregation until 1903 when the church edifice of stone on Twenty-Ninth Street was dedicated, 20 December that year. The interior of the building was destroyed by fire, 27 January 1906, but rebuilt and reoccupied, 12 May 1907.⁷

By 1882 a Methodist church of frame construction stood on the northeast corner of Washington Avenue at Twenty-Sixth Street.⁸ The congregation of Trinity Methodist erected in 1900 their present house of worship in the two hundred block on Twenty-Ninth Street.

On 28 October 1883 the Reverend W. A. Campbell organized a group of Presbyterians who worshipped for several years in the Union chapel before erecting a church building in the one hundred block on Twenty-Seventh Street. This served until the growing congregation built in 1900 the first unit in the present edifice on Thirty-Second Street.

The Trinity Lutheran congregation organized, 4 December 1898, purchased the Presbyterian frame church building on Twenty-Seventh Street for \$7000 and held services there, 3 September 1899.⁹ Fifty years later the congregation moved to a newly erected brick edifice on Huntington Avenue at Sixty-Eighth Street.

The congregation of the First Christian church has occupied for seventy years their house of worship in the one hundred block on Thirtieth Street. The brick building with a towering steeple erected in 1890 is the oldest original church building in the old city. A new house of worship is in the process of construction on Todd's Lane in Hampton.

St. Vincent's Catholic church originally was located adjacent to the northeast corner of Washington Avenue at Thirty-Fourth Street, where stood the home of the priest. The frame structure was replaced in 1916 by the present stone edifice erected on the corner of Huntington Avenue and Thirty-Second Street.

N O T E S

1. See articles on city's "Ancient Oak," *Times-Herald*, 3 April 1918 and 2 February 1934.
2. Cerinda W. Evans, *Collis Potter Huntington*, II, 564, 565.

3. *Ibid.*, 566.
4. *Ibid.*, 566, 568; John R. Swinerton, first manager of the hotel, remained a resident of Newport News.
5. Personal knowledge.
6. W. T. Stauffer article, *Daily Press*, 14 May 1939, Sec. E, p. 1, *et seq.*
7. Lewis Peyton Little, *History of the First Baptist Church 1883-1933* (Franklin Printing Co.), pp. 21, 22, 27, 30, 55, 56, 61-63, 69, 138, 141, 149.
8. *Ibid.*, 53.
9. *The History of Lutheran Church Newport News* (1923), 14, 15.



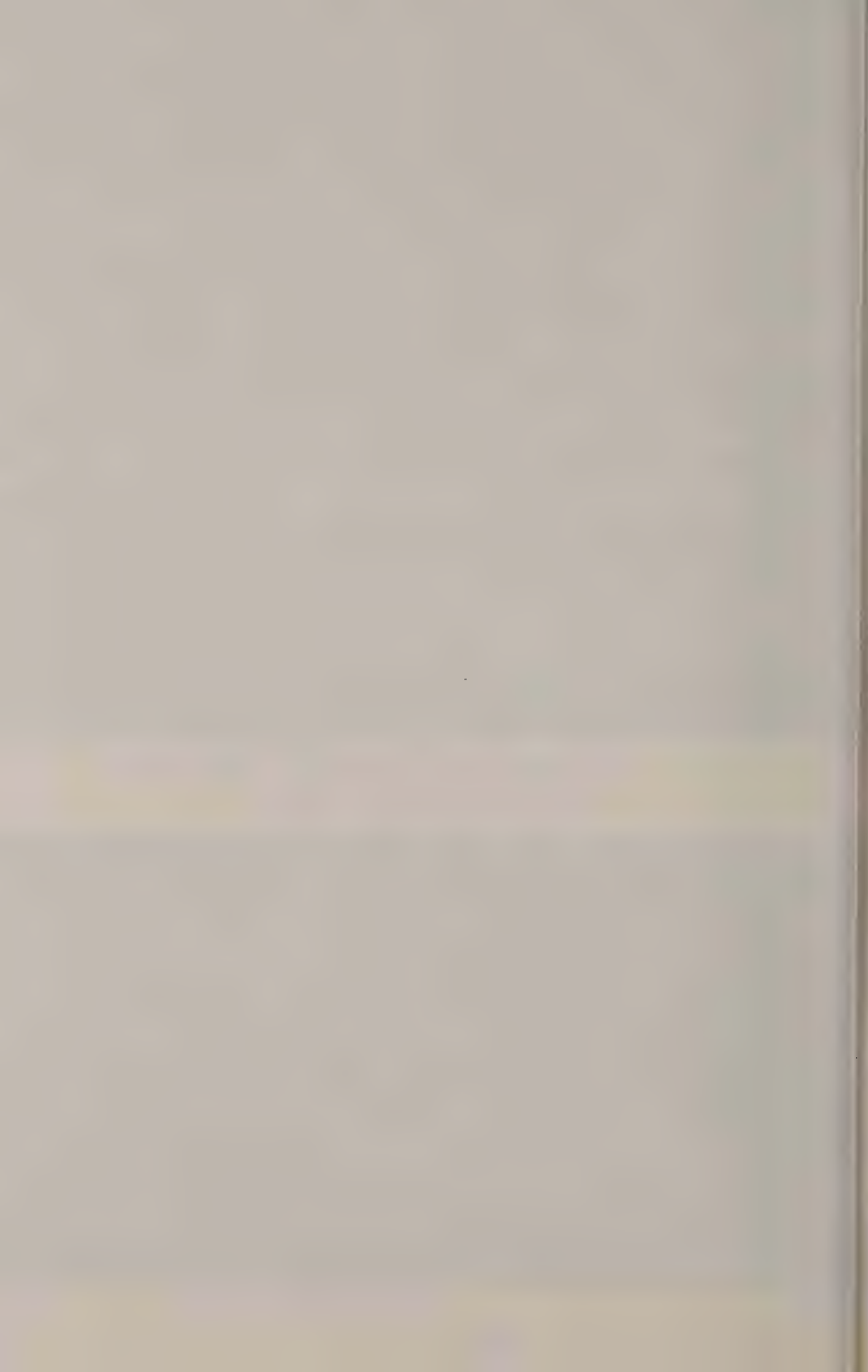
COURTESY NEWPORT NEWS SHIPBUILDING AND DRY DOCK COMPANY

*Newport News Shipbuilding and Dry Dock Company waterfront, 1960.
Vessels at piers docked for repairs and overhaul.*



COURTESY NEWPORT NEWS SHIPBUILDING AND DRY DOCK COMPANY

Sentinel of the Sea.



Industrial Development

THE reorganization of the Chesapeake and Ohio in 1888 thrust the railroad in close connection with the Morgan-Vanderbilt interests of Wall Street, New York. The change in control resulted in a severe disadvantage to the port of Newport's News and the plans projected by Collis P. Huntington to utilize to the fullest the potentialities of the great harbor and its development as the main port on the Atlantic coast.¹

The Shipyard

With a change in outlook for the newly established port, there is a certainty that the area would have felt a setback more severe than actually occurred had not Huntington, meanwhile, conceived other plans for the area. In face of the national business depression that was largely responsible for the plight of the Chesapeake and Ohio, Collis P. Huntington, with his unfailing optimism and resourcefulness, projected an enterprise close by his favored "Half Acre."² Although Mr. Huntington did not live to see the full fruition of his undertaking, this industry subsequently was to become one of the world's largest shipbuilding plants.

A charter was granted, 28 January 1886, for incorporation of the Chesapeake Dry Dock and Construction Company, for the purpose of constructing and maintaining ship repair facilities. Potential business for the company already existed in the large number of vessels of all descriptions that navigate the harbors of Hampton Roads and the James River.³ In addition, there was a supply of labor among the whites of the surrounding area, whose economic outlook had been totally changed by the Civil War. Also, there was the lately freed Negro populace in tide-water, both native and migrant.⁴ Hundreds of the able bodied, though untrained men, were available for jobs. Although totally unskilled for the most part in trades that required a high

degree of careful workmanship, Mr. Huntington was unshaken in his confidence in the capacity of both blacks and whites to learn.

Thus, here in Newport's News was a first, early step in the industrialization of the South. The homogeneity of the racial background of potential workers was an asset.⁵ Coupled with this, labor was cheap. Even so, the rewards to the erstwhile unemployed, both in earnings and a chance to learn, surpassed for many any other opportunities afforded in the area. The hours of work engaged in then, now seem long, but from seven a.m. to six p.m., with an hour at noon for rest and lunch, was the normal working day. Even so, the ten hours a day, sixty hours a week⁶ required were less than the average agricultural worker was wont to put in on the unmechanized farms of the area.

"The Best Location in the World"

The tract acquired and selected for the new plant had a frontage of 425 feet along Washington Avenue.⁷ The land formerly owned by the Lee family had been conveyed to a representative of the Huntington interests in 1866. Of the site Collis P. Huntington later said:

It was my original intention to start a shipyard and plant in the best location in the world, and I have succeeded in my purpose. It is right at the gateway of the sea. There is never any ice in winter and it is never so cold but you can hammer metal out of doors.⁸

Expansion of the Shipyard

The dry dock was completed in April 1889 and officially opened 24 April that year with the docking of the U. S. Monitor *Puritan*.⁹ Shortly, decision was reached not only to repair vessels at the Yard but to build ships of some size. Accordingly, by charter dated 17 February 1890, the name of the company was changed to the Newport News Shipbuilding and Dry Dock Company at Newport News Virginia.¹⁰ The first vessel built at

the Yard was the tug *Dorothy*, launched, 17 December 1890.¹¹ This tug was still in service 1945 and was pictured assisting in docking hull No. 439, the huge aircraft carrier *Midway*. The launching of the first large steamship took place, 16 March 1892, when *El Sud* slid down the ways midst the cheers of thousands on hand to witness the event.¹² The history of the Shipyard, a story in itself, is a saga which parallels the progress of the American Merchant Marine and the development of power for U. S. Naval vessels from steam to nuclear propulsion.¹³

Fresh Water Supply

With the establishment of this important enterprise, utilities and improvements for the town were deemed essential, and incorporation of the community as a city was anticipated. Meanwhile, the Shipyard required quantities of fresh water, while the supply in the area of the town from wells was not adequate. Thus, to provide for both water and light, the Newport News Light and Water Company sponsored by the Old Dominion Land Company was organized, 1889.¹⁴ The laying of the water pipe lines through a wooden conduit, since replaced, was begun, 16 October 1891, this to bring water from a pumping station eighteen miles distant at the Lee Hall Lake, selected for the reservoir. The water supply for the Peninsula was extended and continued in operation under the company chartered for the purpose until the holdings of the Old Dominion Land Company were purchased in 1925 by John N. Shannahan and associates. At that time the city of Newport News acquired the water works and all holdings at a price of \$3,000,000. Under a special act of the Virginia Assembly, the operation of this utility in 1926 was vested in a commission appointed by the City Council.¹⁵ At the onset of World War II, the system already extended to include Harwood's Mill Pond and Skiffe's Creek, was further enlarged to bring a supply of water from the Chickahominy at a cost of \$4,889,969. Of this amount, \$3,594,399 was made available through a federal grant, as the

extension was in the nature of an emergency to care for the large military population that occupied the Peninsula area during World War II.¹⁶

When the old city of Newport News and the city of Warwick consolidated under charter, the water works were made a departmental operation under the city manager.¹⁷

Early Transportation

The earliest public transportation in Newport's News was by horse drawn cars.¹⁸ The first electric car to operate between Newport's News and Hampton made its first trip, 24 December 1892, but by 1895 the service had expanded to operate between the Shipyard and the Chesapeake and Ohio terminal.

Court House

By 1888 the lower part of Warwick County, having become the center of population, Newport's News had been made the County seat.¹⁹ A joint Court House and Clerk's office was built at Lafayette Avenue and Twenty-Fifth Street on land donated by the Huntington interests.²⁰ The old building was torn down during World War II to make room for the present modern Court House adjoined by the Clerk's office.

N O T E S

1. Cerinda W. Evans, *Collis Potter Huntington*, II, 586.
2. *Ibid.*, 589.
3. *Ibid.*, 590.
4. Negroes had flocked to the Newport News-Hampton area, 1861, expecting to be cared for by the federal government. They were designated "contraband" by Gen. Benj. F. Butler. (*Battles and Leaders of the Civil War*, II, 146). To utilize these people not otherwise occupied, Gen. Butler assigned the men to digging trenches and the women to laundry work for the troops.
5. The white population almost altogether Anglo-Saxon.

6. William E. Blewett, Jr., "Always Good Ships"—A History of the Newport News Shipbuilding and Dry Dock Company (The Newcomen Society in North America, 1960), p. 12.
7. Cerinda W. Evans, *Collis Potter Huntington*, II, 592; the bounds originally were between 39th and 41st Streets.
8. William E. Blewett, Jr., "Always Good Ships," etc., 9; first shipyard payroll for month of December 1888 amounted to \$100.64; for the year 1960 the yard payroll exceeded one hundred million dollars (*Shipyards Bulletin*, January 1961, p. 2).
9. Cerinda W. Evans, *Collis Potter Huntington*, II, 595.
10. *Ibid.*, 597, 600.
11. *Ibid.*, 602.
12. *Ibid.*, 606.
13. William E. Blewett, Jr., "Always Good Ships"—A History of the Newport News Shipbuilding and Dry Dock Company (The Newcomen Society in North America, 1960), pp. 8-27; when commissioned in the fall of 1961 the *Enterprise* CVA (N) 65, christened 24 September 1960, will be the first naval combatant surface vessel to operate on nuclear power (*Shipyards Bulletin*, September 1960, p. 4); four nuclear Fleet Ballistic Missile submarines built or building at the N.N.S.&D.Co., 1960 (*Shipyards Bulletin*, December 1960, p. 14).
14. Cerinda W. Evans, *Collis Potter Huntington*, II, 596.
15. Upon acquisition of the holdings of the Old Dominion Land Co., Shannahan and associates immediately negotiated with the City of Newport News for the city's purchase of the water works system serving the lower Peninsula.
16. *Newport News During the Second World War* (1948), 77.
17. Charter of the City of Newport News, operative 1 July 1958.
18. According to the late J. A. Willett, Sr., who came to Newport News 1891 (*Daily Press*, 16 January 1936)
19. A bill enrolled in the General Assembly, 1887-88, to authorize removal of court house (John W. Williams, *Index to Enrolled Bills 1776-1910*, p. 916); Common Law Book, 1888. Circuit Court. pp. 214.
20. Cerinda W. Evans, *Collis Potter Huntington*, II, 565.

The City Chartered

SUCCESSFUL operation of the railroad, increased shipping at the port and industrial development stimulated the town's growth. Thus, before 1896, a separation of the town from the county was deemed essential. Accordingly, at the forthcoming session of the General Assembly, a charter for incorporation of Newport News as a city was sought and granted, 16 January 1896.¹

First City Officials

The government of the new city was vested in a Council, the first members of which were named in the charter, two from each of the seven wards into which the city was divided. The first mayor, also named, was Walter A. Post, who had come to Newport's News in 1881 as a young engineer. He became general manager of the Shipyard in 1905 and president of the company in 1911. The designated councilmen were as follows: Claude M. Barham, George W. Burcher, F. C. Lenz, Joseph Banks, Carter Perkins, Sumpter Davis, D. S. Jones, George Via, J. A. Willett, E. W. Robinson, James F. Hughes, J. J. O'Donnell, James Dougherty and Mike McLaughlin.

The following designated officials served: treasurer, James M. Curtis; clerk of courts, Doug Smith; city sergeant, E. W. Milstead; commonwealth attorney, J. K. M. Newton; constable, R. S. Shield. The chief of police, who had a tough job, was Sheldon J. Harwood.² Shortly after incorporation, the Corporation Court was created and T. J. Barham, then thirty-three years of age, appointed Judge. He served the city until his death in 1937.³ His son Baxter Barham is clerk of courts, part one of the consolidated city. J. W. G. Blackstone was Judge of the Circuit Court.

Members of the Council and officials, with exception of the Judges, were subject to election, May 1896. Those chosen by the electorate took their seats the following July.

Law and Order

The administration of the city at the outset was anything but an easy task. Prior to incorporation the matter of maintaining law and order was a serious and difficult problem. There were seventy-two saloons spread out in all parts of the town. Twenty-Third Street, Hell's Half Acre and Bloodfield were notorious trouble spots. A killing every Saturday night was a common occurrence. The early police headquarters and station were in a convenient area on Hell's Half Acre in Gordon's ice house.⁴

The deplorable situation, which faced the newly chartered city, was due in large measure to irresponsible officials into whose hands government of the area had fallen during the Reconstruction period. The matter of dislodging from office the "carpet-baggers" and the illiterate Negroes was a task of great magnitude. When Judge Barham assumed office in the newly created city, a Negro James Seals was commonwealth's attorney and another Negro M. D. Wright was commissioner of revenue.⁵

In the newly chartered city the management of the police department was vested in a Commission of "three discreet persons." J. D. G. Brown was Police Justice. He administered his duties with good humor and humanity while doling out the justice that befell frequent repeaters.⁶

The 1896 Scene

In 1896 the business section of Newport News greatly contrasted with the present. There was no paving either on avenues, streets or sidewalks, except for an occasional brick or wooden walk-way. Ladies with long sweeping skirts, then in vogue,

brushed the dust and dirt along as they visited the stores, having to shake out their garments upon arrival home.

The First National Bank Building at Twenty-Eighth and Washington Avenue was erected in 1892 after the bank, originally known as the First National Bank of Newport News, had operated for several years in the Warwick Hotel.⁷

Johnson's Opera House located on the west side of Washington Avenue between Twenty-Sixth and Twenty-Seventh Streets and Barton's Theater on Twenty-Third Street offered entertainment for the boom town.⁸ The latter provided the variety type of amusement with risque shows offered to a patronage which preferred them. Conveniently located in the same area also were the habitats of the "ladies of easy virtue."

A post office first maintained at the Warwick Hotel, later was moved to more commodious quarters on the east side of Washington Avenue at Twenty-Fifth Street.⁹ Nearby was the Methodist Church, since moved to Twenty-Ninth Street.

Business in Operation

Next to the corner at Twenty-Eighth Street went up a brick building to house the dry goods emporium operated by two young Welshmen, Griffith and Lewis, who had been attracted to the area by reports of prosperity. Diagonally across the street was Dick Richard's grocery store, a general meeting place. But for the merchant's convenient arrangement of carrying family purchases "on the books" many of the early residents of Newport News would have had sparse meals until pay day came around. Adjoining Richards', M. H. Lash had erected a brick building to house his furniture store moved from Hampton in 1890. His service in accommodating installment buyers, enabled many a family newly arrived in the town to purchase household furniture. A dollar or two down and a dollar a week was within reach of the average man whose pay was \$40 a month.¹⁰

Newspapers

The furniture business on both a cash and credit plan proved profitable. Thus, when Charles E. Thacker, a young newspaper man from Petersburg arrived in Newport News, 1894, he was able to interest M. H. Lash in financing his idea for a daily newspaper.¹¹ With considerable experience, but no funds, Thacker enlisted the interest of his friend in advancing the first \$500 to purchase the equipment with which to start the operation of the *Daily Press*, the first newspaper with a daily schedule continuous to the present to be published in Newport News.¹² With rapid growth of the town when need for expansion was evident, a stock company was formed, M. H. Lash withdrew, and the Schmelz Brothers, bankers of Hampton, acquired a substantial interest in the newspaper. Charles E. Thacker served as editor until illness forced his retirement and sale of his stock in 1910. An afternoon paper, the *Evening Telegram* was published by the company. Subsequently, rival morning and afternoon papers the *Herald* and the *Times* appeared in the city. Four publications daily proved unprofitable. Today, the remaining evidence of competing publications is in the afternoon *Times-Herald* taken over and published by the *Daily Press, Inc.* Later, *The Record*, an afternoon paper with a Sunday morning edition undertook publication, but shortly went out of existence.

The Bill-of-Fare

Meat just off the hoof was available at Hautz butcher shop located on Washington Avenue between Thirty-First and Thirty-Second Streets. Hautz's pig running at large was a living advertisement for the genial butcher's succulent chops available at two pounds for a quarter. The familiar animal probably inspired the 1896 city ordinance prohibiting "hogs, dogs and other animals from running at large."

Hook and line fish were plentiful. Eight or ten nice trout or spot, "aliving and kicking," strung on a wire, could be had in

season at ten cents a bunch from the itinerant Negro fishermen, who were wont to combine recreation with a means of livelihood. Appearing from the several ravines that ran down to the waterfront they readily made their sales without benefit of license, inspection or place of business.

Numerous boarding houses in operation cared for the many men who had come to the area to obtain employment. The more *élite* of these were in the one hundred block on Twenty-Ninth Street. For the most part they were presided over by ladies whose families had seen "better days." With heirloom silver laid out before them at meals, the women maintained an ante-bellum formality and dignity as they dispensed Virginia ham, fried chicken, black-eyed peas, sweet potatoes, turnip salad, hot biscuits and batter bread.

Homes

In 1896 there was an unobstructed view of the Shipyard from Thirtieth Street, there being only two dwellings in the intervening area, that of H. B. Bailey at the corner of the present Thirty-Fourth Street, to which only a foot-path then led, and the Hawkins house on the bluff at Thirty-Fifth Street.¹³ Mr. Bailey later served without compensation as librarian for the Newport News Public Library. On the corner of Thirtieth Street and Washington Avenue was the home of Colonel Carter Braxton, civil engineer, who surveyed for the Chesapeake and Ohio line from Lee Hall, supervised excavations for the Shipyard and assisted in laying out the town. The rambling house stood somewhat back from the avenue in a grove of trees. Shortly after incorporation, two city officials, James M. Curtis and Emmett Milstead built homes on Thirty-Fourth Street. This signaled a considerable development in the intervening area.

The Weyanoke Sinks

On 28 October 1896, the Newport News community was aroused in the middle of the night by a series of alarming

blasts from boat whistles. The steamer *Weyanoke* on a night run to Richmond up the James River, had collided with the U. S. Cruiser *Columbia*, anchored just outside the channel, approximately at the foot of Twenty-Ninth Street. The *Weyanoke*, sinking rapidly, left exposed only the upper end of her mast. Several lives were lost though the *Columbia* was able to rescue most of the passengers and crew.¹⁴ For many years, the mast, a stark reminder, was in evidence in the river. Wreckage from the sunken steamer, later dynamited, was strewn along the shore and provided material for a number of beachcombers' shacks long in existence in the ravine which led from Thirtieth Street.¹⁵ Here, for the convenience of the men who "lived by the sea," nature had provided an ample spring of fresh water, which served as an auxiliary supply during a severe drought in the community.

The Big Freeze

The year 1898, fraught with problems, was one long remembered. It was the year of the big freeze when a heavy snowfall lay on the ground for weeks, while the subfreezing temperature kept ice in the river. Never since has the community been so afflicted by cold.

Yellow Fever Scare

During the summer of 1899, a panic seized the community. Reported symptoms of yellow fever among the inmates of the Soldiers Home in Phoebus resulted in an immediate quarantine against the whole area by communities to the north and south. This added to the fright and the confusion as the only exit from the Peninsula then open was via Richmond. The hurry of families to get out of town amounted to flight, as thousands of persons crowded outgoing Chesapeake and Ohio trains.¹⁶

Newport News was a deserted city. In a few days, however, word got about that the fears were premature as the cause of

illness was diagnosed as poisoning from polluted water conveyed from a cistern serving the Soldiers Home.

NOTES

1. For charter, see first *Code Book*, *City of Newport News* (Office of City Manager); also *Daily Press*, 16 January 1936.
2. *Ibid.*
3. *Ibid.*
4. *Ibid.*
5. *Ibid.*, p. 11.
6. Walter Kelly, on the vaudeville circuit in the early 20th Century, based his act on scenes he witnessed in Justice Brown's court.
7. Cerinda W. Evans, *Collis Potter Huntington*, II, 566.
8. The Academy of Music erected at the turn of the century at Washington Avenue and 33rd Street replaced Johnson's Opera House; the former was torn down after World War I and the Paramount Motion Picture Theater built on the site.
9. Cerinda W. Evans, *Collis Potter Huntington*, II, 566.
10. Personal knowledge.
11. *Ibid.*
12. The *Wedge*, owned and edited by Cash Thomas, began publication in *Newport News* 21 April 1883, and was issued first from rooms in the Warwick Hotel; it did not survive; other publications were attempted in the area, among them the *Daily Ticket*, issued prior to 1897 by Misses Elizabeth and Sally Clarke, better known in later years as Mrs. Douglas Huntly Gordon of Baltimore and Mrs. William Roane Aylett of *Newport News* (Elizabeth Gordon, *Days of Now and Then* (1945), 39, 41.
13. For Hawkins' house, see *Daily Press*, 14 May 1939, Sec. B, p. 8. The Bailey house is still standing.
14. W. T. Stauffer article, *Daily Press*, 14 May 1939.
15. The name board *Weyanoke* salvaged from the wreck hung for many years above the doorway of the shack of Capt. Knewstep, genially known as the "king of the river."
16. W. T. Stauffer article, *Daily Press*, 14 May 1939, Sec. E.

The Turn of the Century

The Spanish-American War

WITH the blowing up of the U.S.S. *Maine* in Havana harbor, 15 February 1898, and subsequent declaration of war against Spain, 21 April, attention of the military and naval forces of the United States was again focused on Newport News. Here, now, as not in other emergencies, were available ample facilities to care for troop movements and handling of supplies. Newport News at once took on the appearance of an armed camp, as regiment after regiment of the National Guard was sent to await transportation to Cuba. The men were encamped on the Casino grounds, on an area adjacent to the Chesapeake and Ohio terminals, on a field south of the Shipyard between Thirty-Fifth and Thirty-Sixth Streets, and in an area north of Forty-Fifth Street from the river to the railroad tracks.¹

The threat of Spain from the sea was of more concern to the Peninsula than the contest on distant lands. Alarm was spread that the Spanish Admiral Cervera's fleet, somewhere in the Atlantic, might make an appearance in Hampton Roads, in which case both the terminals of the Railway and the Shipyard would be targets.² Subsequently, it appeared that Cervera's fleet was far from an efficient arm of the Spanish Navy. At that time, however, the young U. S. Navy had not been tried for its strength.

Impetus to Shipbuilding

The necessity for augmenting the naval service was foreseen in 1896 when the Shipyard was awarded contracts for building three battleships, the *Kentucky*, the *Kearsage*, and the *Illinois*. In 1898, the Yard received contracts for the monitor *Arkansas* and the battleship *Missouri*.³

At this time, also, the further development of the American Merchant Marine was under way, as the result of American plans to complete the Panama Canal and establish bases in the Orient to protect trade routes. The Shipyard received contracts accordingly with resulting economic benefit to the Peninsula.

Public Utilities

In the interim, prosperity and potential outlook for "good times" had led to the establishment of competing companies in the field of public utilities. Rival telephone lines, the Citizens and the Bell, neither providing communications with the other, functioned separately, but eventually consolidated under the Bell system.

While the Newport News Light and Water Company, sponsored by the Old Dominion Land Company, was chartered in 1889 to furnish water, gas and electricity, a rival company appears to have been the pioneer in an effort to supply electricity. The Peninsula Electric Light and Power Company was granted a franchise in 1891 by the supervisors of Warwick County. This called for the erection of a generating station and a distribution system along the highways" to serve the village of Newport News and adjacent portions of Warwick County." Prior to incorporation of the city an independent company was chartered to supply the area with illuminating gas. Eventually, electrical, gas and street car services were absorbed into the Newport News and Hampton Railway, Gas and Electric Company.⁴

Local Transportation

Public transportation in a growing industrial community was a potential source of revenue. Everybody rode the street cars — to work, to shop, to social functions and to visit. Saturday nights saw the trolleys filled with ladies and gentlemen in evening clothes bound for the dances at the Chamberlin. And, every summer evening young swains with their dates boarded

the street cars — their destination — the dancing pavilion at Buckroe Beach.

With good business in prospect additional electric railway companies were organized. One of them built a track on Huntington Avenue and projected a line paralleling Shell Road when the company merged with that already in operation. The other competing company ran its track from Newport News to Old Point via the Boulevard with a spur track serving Buckroe Beach.⁵ In 1898 and 1899 the city granted franchises both to the Newport News, Old Point Railway and Electric Company and the Peninsula Railway Company for rights of way "across the bridges in course of construction."⁶

Bridges

These bridges were built over the Chesapeake and Ohio Railway yards at Twenty-Fifth, Twenty-Eighth and Thirty-Fourth Streets.⁷ The structures greatly facilitated transportation "across the tracks," as well as the trips by pedestrians.

Small Boat Harbor

One of the most useful of developments after the turn of the century was the creation of the municipal Small Boat Harbor. Newport News, admirably fitted for traffic for large ocean-going vessels, felt keenly the need for a harbor where small boats might dock, and take on and discharge cargoes. W. E. Cottrell, a prime mover in projecting such a harbor, in 1913 convinced the city fathers of its potential value. Accordingly, seventy-five acres of land adjacent to Newport News creek were acquired. The creek was dredged to the length of 2400 feet with a width of 300 feet, a bulkhead was constructed, and a pier 350 feet long built at a total cost of \$335,000.⁸ Developed approximately fifty years ago, the harbor has returned in revenue to the city approximately three times its original cost.

Ferry Service

A double end ferry service operating every twenty minutes across Hampton Roads to Pine Beach used the pier at the harbor until the Hampton Roads tunnel was opened in 1957. However, before ferry service was established here, the ferry, on a less frequent schedule, operated from the foot of Ivy Avenue and later from a point on the Boulevard.

Automobiles Appear

Automobiles began to make their appearance on the Peninsula about the turn of the century. At first they were a curiosity, occasionally seen "chugging" at the rate of about ten miles an hour up the dirt streets, or more frequently stalled midst an admiring crowd gathered to witness the efforts of the owner to get under way. Out front, with linen duster flying, the exasperated driver cranked vigorously (no self-starters in those days) while his perturbed wife, well shielded both in duster and veil stood helplessly by, awaiting the spurt of the gasoline engine. There were, of course, no service stations, and the only hope for a fractious engine was to be ignominiously hitched to a horse-drawn wagon for the continued journey.

Public Improvements

This situation, however, was not to prevail. Shortly, both gasoline engines and streets were improved. In 1899 the city council had initiated a bond issue to begin paving. This was authorized by the electorate, and in 1900 the work of hard surfacing portions of Washington Avenue and Twenty-Fifth Street was under way.⁹

A bond issue of \$140,000 for a sanitary system was authorized in 1899. Prior to that time, sewers to serve developments had been privately laid by the Old Dominion Land Company, B. J. Pressy, J. V. Cosby, and F. F. Finch.¹⁰ Subsequently, these private lines were taken into the city system.

Thus, with public utilities established, municipal improvements under way and business flourishing, Newport News began to lose its appearance as a pioneer industrial town and take on the look of a prosperous city.

N O T E S

1. W. T. Stauffer article, *Daily Press*, 14 May 1939, Sec. E.
2. *Ibid.*
3. William E. Blewett, Jr., "Always Good Ships" — A History of the *Newport News Shipbuilding and Dry Dock Company*, 11.
4. W. T. Stauffer article, *Daily Press*, 14 May 1939, Sec. E, p. 15.
5. *Ibid.*
6. *First Code Book, City of Newport News* (Office of City Manager).
7. *Ibid.*
8. *Newport News, Virginia 1921 Year Book*, 30.
9. *First Code Book, City of Newport News* (Office of City Manager).
10. *Ibid.*

World War I

FOLLOWING the impetus given shipbuilding during and after the Spanish-American War and a corresponding economic growth in the community, a national business recession made itself felt in the shipbuilding city. Then employment at the Yard was reduced to less than half. Again a nationwide economic lull in 1913 had repercussions in Newport News. However, a threatened depression was soon offset by activity incident to the outbreak of the war in Europe, July 1914.

British Remount Station

The impact of the war was felt almost immediately. Very shortly the British government established a remount station at Newport News and began to ship mules and horses to Europe via the port. Captain James Gregg of the British army was in charge of the operation, which not only involved the animals, but vast cargoes of grain and shortly other commodities.¹

Curtis Flying School

The Curtis Flying School was established early in 1914 in the area immediately adjacent to the Small Boat Harbor. Under the direction of Captain Thomas Scott Baldwin, an ex-balloon explorer, a number of men were trained in the open cockpit flying-boats and in the "crates," the latter land based planes, so designated because of their open box-like construction. These men, for the most part, entered either the Canadian Army as flyers, or joined the Lafayette Esquadron for service under the French flag.

Among the aircraft pioneers who served as instructors were Victor Carlstrom and Ted Hequembourg.² Perhaps, the most widely known of the pupils was Vernon Castle, an erstwhile Tehsichorean, who with his wife Irene Castle of similar fame,

lived in the community for many months while Castle received the necessary training to enter the service.

Ships Interned

Soon after the outbreak of the war, the *Budapest*, an Austro-Hungarian steamship of 5,500 tons sought refuge from the British Navy in Newport News harbor and was followed by the *Arcadia*, a 9,000-ton German steamship bound for Newport News and New Orleans with a cargo of toys. Both ships remained in port until the United States entered the war, when they were taken over by the government. E. Smola, since engaged for some years in Newport News in the nautical instrument business, was first officer aboard the *Budapest*, and Carl Cruse, who also became a local resident, was ship carpenter aboard the *Arcadia*.³

German Cruisers Arrive

In the spring of 1915 two converted German cruisers, the *Eitel Frederick* and the *Kronprinz Wilhelm*, in need of repairs and supplies, had eluded the British fleet in the Atlantic and slipped into port at Newport News. The arrival of both ships on separate occasions created national sensations. Given a limited period under international law to remain in port, both chose to be interned rather than to attempt to pass the British patrol beyond the three-mile limit in the Atlantic. When the United States entered the war both ships were taken over for service. The *Eitel Frederick* was renamed the *Da Kalb* and the *Kronprinz Wilhelm*, the *Von Steuben*.⁴

Prize Crew brings in Appam

Excitement ran high on 31 January 1916 when a captured British merchantman *Appam*, in charge of a German prize crew of twenty-three men sought haven in Newport News. She steamed in and dropped anchor just off the Casino grounds. Captured off the Canary Islands by the *Moewe*, a German raider,

the *Appam*, en route from South Africa to Liverpool, was placed under command of Lieutenant Hans Berg, who was directed to "bring the ship to the nearest American harbor and there to lay up."

With the cooperation of the British Vice-Consul C. E. Kenworthy, the local representative of the Associated Press was the one reporter allowed aboard the tug which met the *Appam* in midstream. The first expressed wish of the bewildered and frustrated Englishmen aboard, headed by Lord and Lady Merriweather was for "a cup of tea." They were promptly escorted by the Vice-Consul and the young reporter to the Warwick Hotel where tea was had and the whole exciting story revealed.⁵ The *Appam* with her German crew remained in the stream for months while litigation over her status finally reached the Supreme Court of the United States.

The United States Enters the War

With the sinking of the *Lusitania* off the coast of Ireland, 7 May 1915, in which tragedy, Albert L. Hopkins, president of the Newport News Shipbuilding and Dry Dock Company,⁶ was among 124 Americans who lost their lives, there was only a question of time until the United States would enter the war on the side of the Allies.

Following a declaration by Germany, February 1917, of unrestricted submarine warfare, the United States broke off diplomatic relations and entered the war, 6 April 1917.

With this altered national outlook, activity at the port suddenly changed and work at the Shipyard was greatly accelerated. There was an employment roll at the latter of 12,500 men and a weekly payroll of \$400,000.⁷

Port of Embarkation Established

Several months prior to the actual declaration of war, the Newport News area was visited by government officials seeking available land for the establishment of military camps from

which men could be temporarily stationed prior to shipment overseas. The use of the port was anticipated as an embarkation depot. Forthwith, land held by the Old Dominion Land Company to the north of the city and adjacent to Hampton Roads was turned over to the Army, who established Camp Hill, north of Sixty-Fourth Street and Camp Alexander on the Warwick road beyond, and adjacent to the railroad tracks. Camp Stuart was laid out on the waterfront between the Small Boat Harbor and Salter's Creek. Colonel, later General Grote Hutchinson was placed in command of the Port of Embarkation established at Newport News.⁸

Fort Eustis

Immediately thereafter the United States Government began to acquire all the land embraced on Mulberry Island in Warwick County, some 7,900 acres. The first transfer of these lands was for a tract of 591.64 acres then owned by Charles Weaver Bailey of Philadelphia. The deed recorded, 27 May 1918, gave the price as \$90,000.⁹ Subsequently, other tracts were acquired either by transfer or by condemnation. The area, renamed Camp Eustis, was first used for a practice field for light artillery.

Warehouses

The shipment of over 4,000,000 tons of military supplies overseas required a large number of warehouses at the port. They were built by the U. S. Government along the Chesapeake and Ohio Railway tracks north of Fortieth Street and in the Morrison area in Warwick County. These warehouses, now property of the Railway, are leased for operation to the Hiden Storage and Forwarding Company.¹⁰

Highways Completed

In connection with the military activities, construction of the much needed links in hard surfaced highways proceeded rapidly. A partially completed concrete road from Richmond was

extended without delay and a road completed from Fort Monroe through Newport News to Lee Hall and thence to Yorktown, at which latter place the fleet made its rendezvous.

A Winter in Camp

The winter of 1917-1918, when military preparations were at their height was unusually severe. Ice and snow made living in temporary quarters difficult. The camps about the city, hastily constructed, were filled with soldiers, some housed in tent-like structures. Negroes brought from the far South and unaccustomed to the cold, fell ill and many died from exposure in the flimsy shelters.

Departure for Overseas

Great secrecy at first was attached to the departure of troops for overseas, beginning in the spring of 1918. Quiet reigned during the day but at night everything was softly stirring. Soon, citizens were aware that the troops were departing for overseas. No martial strains filled the air, but as silently as possible in the dead of the night, the men marched to the piers, or were transported in trucks. Alternating with the rumble of loaded vans was the tramp, tramp of heavy booted soldiers. But it was the "swish, swish" of their loaded packs that gave away their mission and indicated their destination. Soon it was evident that secrecy could not be maintained and the heavy tread and ghostly "swish" were livened by martial strains. To the tune of "Over There" thousands marched through the streets of Newport News to board the waiting transports.¹¹

Hilton Village

Anticipating the absolute requirement for additional workers needed for the accelerated shipbuilding program at the Yard and the necessity for housing for them, the Newport News Shipbuilding and Dry Dock Company in cooperation with the Emergency Fleet Corporation of the U. S. Shipping Board,



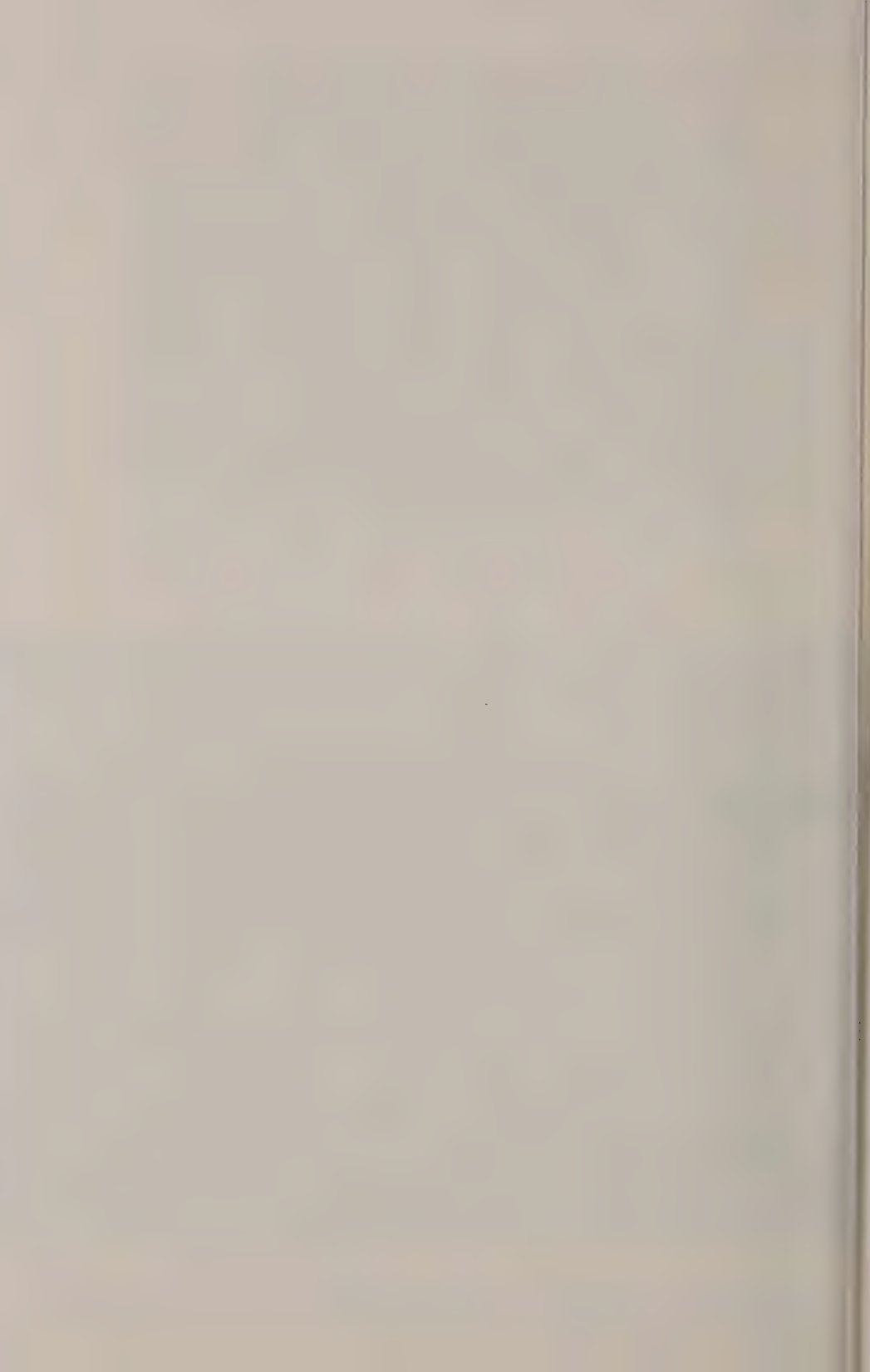
PHOTO BY HOLLADAY—COURTESY, NEWPORT NEWS PUBLIC LIBRARY

Victory Arch, showing oncoming units of the 116th Infantry of the 29th Division arriving in Newport News, 20 May 1919.



PHOTO BY HOLLADAY—COURTESY, NEWPORT NEWS PUBLIC LIBRARY

Official party extends welcome to units of the 29th Division, 20 May 1919. Governor Westmoreland Davis and Brigadier General Harley B. Ferguson, center, with mayors of Virginia cities and other officials. Foreground, members of Red Cross canteen corps, who served all outgoing and incoming transports.



acquired one hundred acres of land in Warwick County then owned by the Warwickshire Corporation, with Frank Darling of Hampton, president and James M. Cumming, secretary-treasurer.¹² This was the Hilton tract, formerly the farm of Pembroke Jones. The 500-odd houses were constructed after the style of those of an English village. The development, open 7 July 1918, for occupancy by Shipyard workers, was not officially completed until October 1919. The first major housing development outside the city of Newport News, had been built at a cost of \$5,000,000. The homes were subsequently sold individually.

The "Flu"

An epidemic of Spanish influenza sweeping Europe in the summer and early fall of 1918 caused illness and innumerable casualties among the fighting forces. No doubt, it contributed to the Armistice agreed upon 11 November 1918. Shortly thereafter, hostilities ceased. By that time Newport News and Warwick County along with the rest of the Atlantic seaboard had felt the effects of the epidemic which had reached the Peninsula by September 1918. A particularly virulent germ caused extreme illness and a great many deaths. So afflicted was the the area that at times friends of the departed had to serve as grave diggers. At one time thirty-seven caskets were piled up at the Chesapeake and Ohio station awaiting shipment. The following year another wave of the influenza, in a less virulent form, swept the Peninsula.¹³

The Victory Arch

In all, 261,820 soldiers of the American Expeditionary forces embarked for Europe from the Chesapeake and Ohio Railway piers at Newport News. On the return, 441,146 soldiers debarked at the terminal and from there many of them marched up Victory Avenue (25th Street) through the Arch of Triumph, hurriedly erected through public subscriptions as evidence of

the community's gratitude and welcome. The inscription on the Arch, penned by R. G. Bickford an attorney of Newport News, reads as follows:

Greetings with love to those who return;
a triumph with tears to those who sleep.

Not only American soldiers but contingents from Canada, from Australia and from New Zealand — the latter two groups bound on long voyages via the Panama Canal across the Pacific to their homeland — passed through the Arch, and were made welcome during their limited stay. Many had been gone from their homes for four years, others were recovering from serious wounds received in the conflict, and all had stories of their own to relate.

*The Twenty-Ninth Returns*¹⁴

Of all the days of welcome extended to the returning forces, the most memorable, perhaps, was 20 May 1919, the occasion of the return of the 116th infantry regiment of the 29th Division, Virginia's own. The town's people en masse, together with thousands of relatives and friends from a distance, lined the avenues and streets from the waterfront beyond. An official party, bands, truck loads of flowers scattered by young ladies, preceded the march. Progress was slow, for time and again the line was halted by joyful relatives, whose emotions were unrestrained as they found in the line of march sons, husbands or betrothed.

The Red Cross

The local chapter of Red Cross through its canteen and motor corps saw to it that no soldier departing from Newport News lacked a farewell nor any arriving lacked a welcome. In their blue uniforms, the women were at the gang planks of all departing and arriving ships, both night and day, distributing coffee, buns, chocolate or other small items along with a cheering word.

Later the women were especially helpful at the convalescent hospitals established at Camp Stuart. Mrs. J. Hugh Caffee headed the Canteen Corps and Mrs. J. O. Arrol, the Motor Corps.

N O T E S

1. Philip W. Hiden, later Mayor of Newport News, worked in cooperation with Capt. Gregg to expedite shipments; after the war, he was awarded by the British a certificate of appreciation for his services.
2. Carlstrom was killed while on a training flight in which Cary Epes of Newport News was a pupil; Ted Hequembourg, pilot of the open cockpit seaplane, was fatally injured in a crash.
3. W. T. Stauffer article, *Daily Press*, 14 May 1939, Sec. E, p. 15.
4. *Ibid.*
5. Account from the A. P. reporter who boarded the *Appam*; also see Stauffer article, *ibid.*
6. William E. Blewett, Jr., "Always Good Ships" — A History of the Newport News Shipbuilding and Dry Dock Company, 13.
7. *Ibid.*; also, W. T. Stauffer article, *Daily Press*, 14 May 1939.
8. Personal interview, March 1937, with Walter B. Livezey, president of Old Dominion Land Co.
9. Warwick County Court Records, Deed Book No. 39, p. 387 (Office, Clerk of Courts No. 2, Newport News); Ft. Eustis named for Brig. Gen. Abraham Eustis, b. 1786, entered army, 1808, first officer to command Coast Artillery School at Fort Monroe; for plat showing land ownership prior to U. S. Army acquisition, see Warwick County Court Records, Deed Book No. 49, p. 202.
10. W. T. Stauffer article, *Daily Press*, 14 May 1939, Sec. E, p. 15.
11. Personal knowledge; through the port were shipped 4,133,873 tons of military supplies and 47,263 animals for use of U. S. Army; 583 troop ships and supply ships sailed from the port, and 634 troop ships and other vessels carrying war supplies arrived at the port (*Newport News, Virginia, 1921 Year Book*, p. 15).
12. Warwick County Court Records, Deed Book No. 41, pp. 98-100, Office, Clerk of Courts No. 2, Newport News; for Operating Agreement between N.N.S.&D.D.Co. and U. S. Shipping Board Emergency Fleet Corp., *ibid.*, Deed Book No. 39, pp. 258-269.

13. W. T. Stauffer article, *Daily Press*, 14 May 1939, Sec. E, p. 15.
14. An Army Division is comprised of approximately 27,000 men. The 29th reached the U. S. aboard several transports. In the 116th infantry regiment aboard the *Matsonia* were the Huntington Rifles of Newport News. Hampton's Battery D of the 111th Field Artillery came in Sunday, 25 May 1919, aboard the *Virginian*. On board also were the 612th Field Artillery, the 312th Machine Gun Battalion and the 10th Balloon Company of the 803rd Transportation Company. There was a second splendid welcome for these returning forces (information from Major Charles F. L. Krause, Fairmount White and the *Daily Press*, 20 and 25 May 1919).

A New City Government

As a result of the essential shipping and shipbuilding incident to the war, a zenith of prosperity had been reached in the community by 1920. With a wartime population of approximately 100,000, real estate values doubled and there was a decided boom in building. At the same time there was crying need for further improvements.

The Old City Government

Administration of the affairs of the growing city became increasingly difficult under the cumbersome, outmoded form of municipal government. In 1904 an elected Board of Aldermen had been appended as a legislative body to work in conjunction with the Common Council.¹ Each body had a president and each body had innumerable committees through which city business had to pass before official consideration could be given.² In addition, there was a mayor elected by the people and charged with administrative duties, but to them he could render only part time service. Both his own affairs and politics were demanding.

A New Council and a City Manager

Thus, steps were taken to amend the city charter to provide for a city manager form of government with a council of five members and a mayor to be chosen by that elected body. Amendment by act of the Virginia Assembly was accomplished, 24 March 1920, following which, the new governing body was elected, as follows: Philip W. Hiden, who was later designated mayor; L. U. Noland, Godfrey L. Smith, W. T. Hopkins and C. C. Smith. Major Leslie G. Thom was appointed city manager.³ He was succeeded by C. E. Douglas, and in 1926, by Joseph C. Biggins, who remained in continuous service and was

chosen city manager of the consolidated city of Newport News, July 1958.⁴

Immediate Improvements

With a more efficient system of administration many improvements were undertaken, in addition to systematizing and departmentalizing functions of the municipality. Under the direction of R. M. Lett, city attorney, a badly needed program of codifying city ordinances was initiated. A general public improvement schedule was adopted with the hard surfacing of the less traveled streets and avenues given priority. The main arteries of travel through the city already had been surfaced. Later, all side streets in the downtown section were widened to care for the increasing automobile traffic.

Economy in government provided funds for many of the improvements. New high schools were built for whites and for Negroes and other elementary schools constructed. A pay scale for teachers, rising considerably above the \$65 a month maximum offered in 1915, was made possible.

The Naval Holiday⁵

With the new government functioning smoothly, prosperity seemed secure; however, the future, oftentimes is fickle. In December 1920, the notion of limitation of armaments came under discussion in the public press. In a mistaken confidence that dispensing with armaments would forever prevent war, the nations agreed to assemble and arrive at terms for effecting disarmament. The outcome of the Washington Naval Disarmament Conference had a direct and disastrous effect on the economy of Newport News. By telegram, 8 February 1922, the Shipyard had cancelled 70 million dollars in contracts for government vessels. The battleship *Iowa* and the cruiser *Constellation* on the ways and in process of construction were ordered scrapped.⁶ The force at the Yard dwindled to 2000 men.

Under the management of Homer L. Ferguson, president of the Yard since 22 July 1915, the Shipbuilding Company took heroic measures. A contract to recondition the *Leviathan*⁷ at a price of \$6,000,000, some \$1,250,000 less than cost, and work in other fields for which the equipment and machinery was suitable, enabled the Yard to maintain a nucleus of its highly trained technical staff for probable future need. In less than two decades another emergency was to turn attention to Newport News with its shipbuilding and shipping facilities.

Stock Market Crash

Newport News and Warwick County had weathered the naval holiday and the general economy of the community had improved with commercial shipbuilding contracts under way at the Yard.⁸ Then, in 1929 the not unexpected crash in the value of securities sold on the New York Stock Exchange shook the country. Ruin followed locally as well as nationally for those who had purchased stocks on a margin beyond their capacity to uphold the values.

Bank Holiday

Even so, Newport News perhaps was in a better situation than most areas of the country. Shipbuilding contracts proceeded and it was not for several years that a declining economy again affected the area. By then, the entire nation was in a serious economic depression and in 1933 a general bank holiday in which all financial institutions were closed briefly, brought the Peninsula face to face with the necessity of inventory. Local banks, with others in the nation closed, but through heroic measures initiated locally and sustained by citizens and business leaders there were no losses to depositors and the general sound economy of the community was upheld.

NOTES

1. The Board of Aldermen functioned from 1 September 1904 to 20 July 1920 and met in a final session with the Common Council, 29 July 1920 (from official records, City of Newport News).
2. Official records.
3. First meeting of Council under approved city manager form of government, 17 June 1920 (see Sec. 18, 1920 city charter); the new government became effective 1 September 1920 (*Newport News, Virginia, 1921 Year Book*, supplement following p. 32).
4. See Chapter I, "City Manager Designated" and "Consolidation Effected."
5. *Shipyards Bulletin*, November 1959, pp. 8-10, "The Dark Days of 1921-22."
6. *Ibid.*, p. 10; also, W. E. Blewett, Jr., "Always Good Ships" — *A History of the Newport News Shipbuilding and Dry Dock Company*, 14, 15.
7. *Ibid.*, 16; also *Shipyards Bulletin*, December 1959, p. 10, "The Leviathan Saves the Day."
8. W. E. Blewett, Jr., "Always Good Ships," etc., 16, 17.

World War II

DURING the years 1933 to 1936, the economy of the area was lean. The unemployment situation nationally was reflected on the Peninsula. Palliative measures in relief programs designed by the federal authorities provided sustenance if not satisfaction to thousands. Both citizens of Newport News and Warwick took temporary advantage of the means of livelihood offered through the Works Progress Administration.

Shipbuilding Underway

At the Shipyard during 1932-33-34, the *Ranger*, the first aircraft carrier designed as such, had been built on a leisurely schedule, with the work week in some departments limited to thirty-two hours. The *Ranger*, delivered in 1934, was followed by the *Yorktown I*, turned over to the U. S. Navy in 1937 and the historic carrier the *Enterprise*, in 1938.¹

Meanwhile, as early as 1936 World War II was foreseen as a possibility. The Maritime Commission, created that year, immediately launched a ten-year program of building fifty ships annually. The first contract awarded was to the Newport News Yard for construction of the SS *America*, 27,000 gross tonnage passenger liner, the largest ever built in this country. Converted into a transport, 1941, and renamed the *West Point*, she circled the globe fourteen times and carried 350,000 passengers during her four years of war service.²

A National Emergency

With World War II impending there was a declaration of a national emergency, 9 September 1939. Work on expansion of the physical plant at the Shipyard shortly got underway.³ With suction dredges in operation twenty-four hours a day and the unceasing hammer of pile drivers sounding for months on

end, there was no one in Newport News who was unaware of an existing emergency.

The Company at Newport News was one of the industries on which the Navy Department relied for design and construction of fighting ships. The need for aircraft carriers resulted in the assignment of a large portion of this important work to the Yard.⁴

With the outbreak of war in Europe, September 1939 and after the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor, 7 December 1941, particularly, the Yard worked on a seven-day week schedule, with three shifts operating. At the peak of employment, April 1943, there were on the Company's roll, 31,016 workers.⁵

With as many as seventeen ships on the ways at one time, the Yard built in all forty-nine vessels for the U. S. Navy during the war. Among these were eight of the 27,000-ton aircraft carriers of advanced design, designated as the *Essex*-class. In addition the Yard refitted, during the war period, 1497 vessels, some of which were extensive conversion jobs.⁶

An account of the accomplishment of the plant of the Newport News Shipbuilding and Dry Dock Company is given in *Newport News During the Second World War* compiled by the Newport News World War II History Commission working in cooperation with the Virginia Commission.

The Shipyard Changes Ownership

Incidentally, the status of the Newport News Shipbuilding and Dry Dock Company had changed in May 1940. After fifty-four years of exclusive ownership by the Huntington family, a group of investment brokers purchased all the Company's stock for \$19,500,000. Under recapitalization, the stock was sold to the public and was later listed on the New York Stock Exchange.⁷

Hampton Roads Port of Embarkation

The tremendous amount of work carried on by the Shipyard during the war and the number of persons employed indicate

the heavy responsibility of the community to care for the influx of workers. Yet, this is only part of the story. The headquarters for the Hampton Roads Port of Embarkation, activated 15 June 1942, were established at Newport News. In all, 1,687,249 men and women passed through the Port and 14,689,312 tons of cargo.⁸

As the full story of this great movement is related in *The Road to Victory* edited by Major W. R. Wheeler and is outlined in less detail in *Newport News During the Second World War*, only a brief summary is here presented.

While both Newport News and Norfolk had been under consideration for the location of Port headquarters, a careful personal survey by officials determined the location at Newport News. Here the deep water terminal was already equipped for handling a large peacetime export and import trade.⁹ These facilities in transportation service were recognized as a material aid to the victory of the American forces, forecast.

The Role of the Chesapeake and Ohio Railway

Minute planning on the part of the Chesapeake and Ohio personnel and long hours of work made possible the conversion of a peacetime enterprise into the third largest port in the country for the sending of men and supplies to the battle areas. In addition to the Army freight and 20,000,000 tons of fuel handled during the war at the Chesapeake and Ohio terminals, lend-lease shipments to America's allies began to flow in volume through the Port after June 1942.¹⁰

Port Personnel

General John R. Kilpatrick was in command of the Hampton Roads Port of Embarkation and the military personnel included 1700 officers and 6500 enlisted men. In addition, 7,020 civilians, many of them natives, were employed at the Port because there was not sufficient military personnel to accomplish the gigantic task of sending men and supplies overseas.¹¹

Camp Patrick Henry

In addition to activities at the Port in Newport News, 1,700 acres of thick woodland in Warwick County, fourteen miles from the old city of Newport News were taken over for conversion into a staging area, designated Camp Patrick Henry. Under management of the Transportation Corps of the Army Service Forces, barracks, roads, sewers, water lines and other facilities were constructed to care for 35,000 men. Up to 31 January 1946, a total of 1,412,107 persons had passed in and out of the camp by way of the Chesapeake and Ohio shuttle service, which supplanted the picturesque marching of the men of World War I days.¹²

Fort Eustis

The facilities at Fort Eustis, established during World War I, were greatly expanded to care for the operation of the Transportation Corps.

Prisoners of War

To alleviate the critical shortage of manpower in the Port area decision was made in 1944 to utilize the labor of German prisoners of war so far as was possible under the limitations of the Geneva conference. The status of Italian prisoners of war had changed with their organization into Italian Service Units. Accordingly, a maximum of 4,077 Germans and a maximum of 1,419 Italians were engaged at the Port and they were housed at Patrick Henry, in barracks adjacent to the Chesapeake and Ohio terminals and adjacent to the overpass near the James River bridge.¹³

Peak Wartime Population

The responsibility of the community to care for the tremendous wartime population and the development of necessary facilities to discharge the responsibility is also recounted in

Newport News During the Second World War and need not be detailed here. With a 77.2 per cent increase in civilian population alone between the years 1940 and 1943, the latter regarded as the peak year, the area of which Newport News was the center, with an estimated population of 189,000, stood second in wartime expansion in the country. Only Mobile, Alabama showed a greater percentage rise in population.¹⁴

Local Men in Service

As there were four channels of service in the Naval and Military forces of the United States open for service to citizens, it is not possible accurately to estimate the number from Newport News and Warwick who served during World War II. By far the largest number were inducted through selective service. Of a total of 23,227 men registered within the old city of Newport News, 8,070 saw service.¹⁵

The Task at Newport News Completed

Notwithstanding Germany's unconditional surrender, 7 May 1945, there was no relaxation of effort in Newport News, at the Shipyard, at the Port, or among city officials until after the formal surrender of the Japanese aboard the *U.S.S. Missouri*, 2 September 1945. Even then, it was difficult for the community to change its pace, so accelerated had life been in every phase.

At the Shipyard, the *Midway*, the first of her class of carriers, considerably larger than the *Essex*-class, was completed just before the Japanese surrender and delivered to the Navy, 10 September 1945. The *Coral Sea*, sister ship of the *Midway* was still on the ways, but work towards completion became less hurried.¹⁶ The Hampton Roads Port of Embarkation was deactivated, 31 January 1946. The civilian population began to turn to peacetime interests and pursuits. Looking ahead, the desirability for uniting the lower Peninsular governmental units began to interest citizens in the community. The outcome

of their thinking and its culmination in eventual consolidation of Newport News and Warwick in 1958 already has been presented.

NOTES

1. W. E. Blewett, Jr., "Always Good Ships" — *A History of the Newport News Shipbuilding and Dry Dock Company*, 18, 19; *Newport News During the Second World War*, 32.
2. *Ibid.*, 24, 31, 32.
3. *Ibid.*, 46-50.
4. *Ibid.*, 31; W. E. Blewett, Jr., "Always Good Ships," etc., 18, 19.
5. *Ibid.*, 20; *Newport News During the Second World War*, 46.
6. *Ibid.*, 34, 37, 42, 45.
7. *Ibid.*, 53; W. E. Blewett, Jr., "Always Good Ships," etc., 19.
8. *Newport News During the Second World War*, 10, 25, 26.
9. *Ibid.*, 9.
10. *Ibid.*, 11.
11. *Ibid.*, 19, 20.
12. *Ibid.*, 21.
13. *Ibid.*, 20, 21.
14. *Ibid.*, 69.
15. *Ibid.*, 145-146.
16. *Ibid.*, 37.

Governmental Changes in Warwick

THE transition of Warwick from county to city status followed the influx of city dwellers into the rural area. When the city of Newport News was chartered, 1896, the county government was returned to Warwick Court House.¹ Noteworthy among the changes then made in officials was the shift in the office of treasurer. James M. Custis, who had been serving the county and town combined, retained the office in the new city and his nephew and deputy Simon Curtis was duly chosen treasurer of Warwick County. Simon Curtis remained in office for forty-nine years and during that time exercised the political control long established by the Curtis family in Warwick.

Hilton Seeks Annexation

When the overflow population from the growing industrial area of Newport News began to flock into rural Warwick, ideas of progress of the newcomers did not coincide with those of the established order. There was an undercurrent of dissatisfaction evident when the residents of Hilton Village in May 1927 sought annexation to Newport News.² They set forth that they wished to share in the progressive government adopted in the city so that they might the more readily secure better streets, improved lighting, up-to-date schools and other facilities which a municipality enjoys. However, aside from the desires of the people, other factors were involved. After due deliberation, the Newport News city council rejected the proposal for annexation of Hilton Village and the intervening area.

Conflicting Ideas of Progress

In the years that followed an expanding population continued to seek improvements, particularly for the schools. Again, ideas of progress were conflicting. The county government, designed

for rural people and controlled by a political dictator, so to speak, moved with caution and conservatism towards innovations.

County Manager Government

An election held, September 1944, to determine whether or not Warwick should adopt the county manager form of government was decided in the affirmative. A provision in the proposal called for the consolidation of the offices of treasurer and commissioner of revenue under a director of finance to serve under the county manager. The new government became effective 1 January 1945, with the following having been chosen as members of the Board of Supervisors: George T. Abernathy, Hugh G. Holloway and Mrs. Katherine M. Ware. J. Clyde Morris was chosen as county manager and T. S. Dunaway, Jr., designated director of finance.

Under the new plan county government was reorganized and its functions departmentalized. Shortly, the seat of government was moved to Main Street in Hilton, where now are located the administrative offices of the greater city of Newport News. Court continued to be held at Warwick Court House, where also was maintained the Clerk's office presided over by George S. DeShazor, Jr., since he took office, 1 January 1928.

Warwick Becomes a City³

By act of the Virginia Assembly, 1952, Warwick County, with an estimated population of 45,000 persons, was granted a charter subject to adoption by referendum, to become a city of the first class. The transition from county status was made 16 July, 1952 following an affirmative vote by the electorate. The county Board of Supervisors became Warwick's first city council. They were: George T. Abernathy, Chairman, Vernon S. Briggs and P. D. Trotter, who served for one year, after which a five-man council was elected to represent the five wards into which the city of Warwick was divided. J. Clyde Morris con-

tinued in office and served as city manager until consolidation, 1 July 1958.

The outgoing members of Warwick's city council 30 June 1958 were: H. M. Hussey, chairman and mayor, R. Bickford Curtis, L. E. Matthews, Mrs. Joel Williams and Paul S. Ward.

N O T E S

1. Bill enrolled in General Assembly, 1895-96 for locating Warwick Court House (John W. Williams, *Index to Enrolled Bills 1776-1910*, p. 998).
2. Official records, City of Newport News.
3. See articles by Alexander C. Brown and John T. Kinnear, *Daily Press*, 16 July 1952, p. 13.

Education

THE first record of any provision for education in the area now Newport News is in the will of Benjamin Symes of Elizabeth City County dated 10 February 1635. He bequeathed his lands and his cattle for the establishment of a free school for the poor children "from Marie's Mount to the Poquoson."¹ Marie's Mount, the Gookin plantation, lay at Newport's News. Just how the children were to be transported over the expanse of territory is not set forth, but the intervening years have solved the problem with the modern school bus. Income from this bequest administered in the Symes-Eaton fund is employed today for public education in the city of Hampton. The bequest is the earliest record of provision for free education in America.

Colonial Schooling

In the colonial period children of plantation owners in Warwick, as elsewhere in Virginia, received their education privately, in their own homes and usually by tutors, or sometimes through instruction by the minister of the parish. Although there appears to have been a genuine interest in seeing that children were taught the fundamentals, provision for such purpose from public funds was non-existent in Warwick in the colonial period and sparse even after the Revolutionary War. Free schooling came from the bequests of public benefactors such as Benjamin Symes.

Orphans or children of poor families were usually "bound out."² In return for their services, which continued until the age of twenty-one for a boy and eighteen for a girl, the master agreed to clothe, feed and usually to teach the apprentice to read and write.

Early Public Schools

By 1832 Warwick County was advancing some funds for education of the poor children, the sum of \$20 for such purpose having been recorded in 1832 and \$57 in 1883. At Warwick Court House in 1836 there was a common school.³ So far as is known there was no school at Newport's News Point until after the Huntington interests began to develop the area. In 1880, sites for two school buildings were presented by the Old Dominion Land Company, one for white children on Twenty-Eighth Street between Washington and Lafayette Avenues, the other for Negro children on Twenty-Second Street between Jefferson and Madison Avenues. Money advanced by the Company for erection of the buildings was repaid.⁴

First Newport News School Budget

Records regarding the schools prior to the city's incorporation in 1896 are sparse. But at that time a school board was appointed as follows: J. A. Buxton, J. J. O'Donnell, W. E. Barrett, Harry Howard, Thomas J. Riley and A. E. Burcher. Thomas Temple Powell was superintendent of schools and presented a budget of \$13,000 for the year's operation. He also noted that the school building on Twenty-Eighth Street was overcrowded, as was the Negro school. Accordingly, the school board took steps to rent rooms in the First National Bank building for a high school and a building for a colored school.⁵ The job of superintendent of schools usually went to some political appointee, whose qualifications as an educator were not considered of paramount importance. The first principal of the high school was Professor H. H. Epes.

School at Gum Grove

By 1880, there was a public school in Warwick at Gum Grove (later Morrison). Children from a considerable distance walked to school. Those living beyond crossed a foot-path along

the dam over the spill-way at Causey's mill pond.⁶ In place of the bridge across the present Lake Maury on Warwick Boulevard there was a deep ravine through which ran the overflow from the mill pond. It was necessary for vehicles to ford the crossing.

Private Schools, Past and Present

Substantial education at public expense was neither a commodity which an impoverished Virginia could afford in the later nineteenth century, nor a popular concept. Those who had the means sent their children to private schools; those who could not afford them accepted what was available. Boys of thirteen and fourteen years of age frequently found jobs if they could and learned from their elders. At that early age they oft-times became self-supporting.

Nevertheless, schooling was considered important. Collis P. Huntington recognized the need in the area where his new shipbuilding plant was established. Hence, in 1891, he provided for education of children of the employees of the Shipyard. A substantial building was erected on Washington Avenue in the block between Thirty-Fifth and Thirty-Sixth Streets and a large adjacent playground set aside. The graded school was presided over by Miss Sarah Newton and furnished a standard of schooling not otherwise available in the area. In 1899 when the program of education at public expense was improved, the school, still privately supported, became a kindergarten for four-, five-, and six-year-old children of Shipyard employees, and was in operation as such until discontinued in 1926. In 1913 Miss Cerinda W. Evans succeeded Miss Newton as principal.⁷

In the Morrison area, even though sparsely settled, there was a private school conducted by Colonel Ham.

Then, in the early 1890's, Mrs. W. W. Harwood opened a girl's boarding and day school on Twenty-Ninth Street in the two hundred block, known originally as the Newport News Female Seminary. The school went out of existence in 1902.

Colonel E. W. Huffman conducted a military school for boys at the old Lafayette house on Huntington Avenue and Twenty-Seventh Street. Later the school was moved to a site overlooking Hampton Roads. After Mrs. Harwood's school closed, the Newport News Academy conducted by Richmond College and partially supported by George Ben West, began operation in the old bowling alley building on the Casino grounds.⁸ Professor E. L. Ligon was in charge and a high standard of instruction was maintained. This too went out of existence as attendance fell off due to the improvement in instruction in the public schools.

The Hampton Roads Academy opened, 1959, and located on a seventy-five acre tract on the Oyster Point Road, now offers college preparatory instruction in the upper elementary grades and high school.

St. Vincent's Catholic School, now located near Virginia Avenue, between Thirty-Third and Thirty-Fourth Streets, though long in existence, recently has enlarged the high school program. With an enrollment of 330 students and a broadened curriculum this Central High School now serves four Catholic grammar schools and six parishes in the area.⁹

Schools 1896 and 1959

In contrast to the \$13,000 budget of the local public schools in 1896, the 1959 school budget in the consolidated city was \$5,520,066, including both city and state funds. There were approximately 24,000 pupils attending twenty-five schools with a teaching and supervisory staff of 950 persons.¹⁰

The Plea for Education

The facts heretofore presented show that public education has not always been the highly popular cause that is it today. Actually, until the drafting of men for military service just prior to World War II pointed out a large illiteracy ratio, school

budgets inevitably were pared down. Annually, the school trustees of the old city of Newport News appeared before the members of the city council to plead the cause of education. At the same time there were many persons in the community who did not then believe in schooling at public expense beyond the three R's. Of these, two prominent and well-to-do citizens regularly appeared before the same councils and demanded that the mounting expense for schooling be curtailed. Others let their views be known, but less publicly.¹¹

There was never a question of whether the school budget should be cut, but the question was how much. To satisfy both groups in the community the Council, caught in the middle of the issue, questioned all items and eventually reached a figure adequate for simple class room instruction in fundamentals.

The Modern School

A popular clamor today in the name of education has greatly broadened the concept, and young people well supplied with free text books in Newport News, are offered libraries, science and business courses, laboratories, courses in trades and crafts, merchandising, music, both vocal and group instrumental, physical education in extensive gymnasiums and on athletic fields. Thus, they find a wide range of choice to suit either mental or physical activity. The studies are pursued and the activities engaged in within terrazzo floored, tiled halled, oak trimmed buildings, often extending some four hundred or more feet in length to accommodate classrooms, auditoriums, cafeterias and activity halls.

Advanced Education

Two institutions in Newport News, one long established and the other to open, September 1961, provide for education in advance of high school. The *Apprentice School* operated by the Newport News Shipbuilding and Dry Dock Company is an

outgrowth of an early apprentice system at the industrial plant. It is today a flourishing trade school which has been in operation as such since 1911. Qualified high school graduates receive training in the trades of their choice, and also attend academic classes. At the end of four years the graduates have acquired the equivalent of a junior college education. Students who show aptitude for drafting remain in the school for an additional year, and Company-sponsored scholarships provide opportunities for advanced study in technical schools. In 1960 there were 475 students in the Apprentice School.¹²

On 18 September 1961, the *Christopher Newport College* of the College of William and Mary will open its doors to students at 222-32nd Street in the building formerly operated as the John W. Daniel Elementary School. The building has undergone extensive renovation. This junior college with a two-year scholastic program was authorized by the 1960 session of the General Assembly to function under the authority of the College of William and Mary. The institution is designed both "to afford educational opportunities of an academic and terminal nature beyond the high school level . . . and to provide the first two years of college work for students desiring to enter a four-year college."¹³

NOTES

1. See Elizabeth City County petitions (Archives, Virginia State Library); also confirmation of will of Benjamin Symes, 1642-43 (W. W. Hening, *Statutes at Large*, I, 252); also Blanche Adams Chapman, *Wills and Administrations of Elizabeth City County, Virginia 1610-1800*, p. 228.
2. W. W. Hening, *Statutes at Large*, II, 298.
3. James Mater, *Gazetteer of Virginia*.
4. Cerinda W. Evans, *Collis Potter Huntington*, II, 565; for account of Newport News schools see *Daily Press*, 14 May 1939, p. 15 E.
5. Total enrollment at this time was 888 pupils while the school population was listed at 1,943 (*Daily Press*, 16 January 1936, p. 11).

6. W. C. Burnham of Warwick County, interviewed by E. O. Smith (Ms. courtesy of Mariners Museum Library).
7. Information supplied by Miss Cerinda W. Evans.
8. *Daily Press*, 14 May 1939, p. 15 E.
9. *Times-Herald*, 12 December 1960, p. 15 E.
10. *Annual Report, 1959, City of Newport News, Daily Press*, 31 January 1960 supplement.
11. Personal knowledge.
12. W. E. Blewett, Jr., "*Always Good Ships*" — *A History of the Newport News Shipbuilding and Dry Dock Company*, 24; also see interview with G. Guy Via, *Daily Press*, 14 May 1939.
13. *Times-Herald*, 25 November 1960.

Recreation and Culture

Boating

THE Newport News area always has been one of ample recreational opportunities. The wide expanse of waterways offers during at least eight months of the year boating and fishing, and for five months swimming and water sports. At Huntington Park on the James River, a recreational pier and beach leased for operation to Red Crosley is a mecca for fishing and boating parties. Similar facilities are available for Negroes at Lincoln Park on Hampton Roads. At Peterson Yacht Basin owned and operated by the city and at the Small Boat Harbor slips are maintained for safe mooring of pleasure boats. Ramps for launching boats from trailers are provided in various sections of the city.

Fishing

Privately operated craft for pleasure fishing are available on several of the numerous waterways that flow into the Chesapeake Bay, Hampton Roads and the James River. In the summer season, spot, trout, mullet, perch, bonita and blue fish are caught in quantities; in the spring, flounders, and in the fall and winter, rock fish. Almost any time, anywhere, during the summer, an amateur may go out in a row boat and pull in croakers. While bait is an important item — the various species of fish being choice in their diets — advice in selection of it is also to be had.

Golf Clubs

Within the city of Newport News the privately owned and operated James River Golf and Country Club, overlooking the James River, provides a picturesque and interesting eighteen hole course, as well as tennis courts and an ample fresh water swimming pool. In Hampton, nearby, and in the adjacent

James City and York Counties are located golf clubs and courses, also privately operated.

City-Sponsored Recreation

The item in the Newport News city budget for recreation for the year 1959 was \$175,561.¹ As this indicates, an extensive program is in operation under direction and supervision. Two recreational buildings with adjacent outdoor areas and swimming pools are maintained by the city, one for whites and one for Negroes.² Also, there are a number of soft-ball leagues and little leagues, the facilities for which are provided by the city. Recently a recreational center has been opened in the former Warwick Court House in the Denbigh area.

An especially broad program of recreation functions during the summer months for young people, the playgrounds about the respective school buildings being the centers of operation. The high schools, both white and Negro, during the school year, have scheduled athletic programs, including football, basketball and track.

The Mariners Museum³

For those whose interests turn in cultural directions, Newport News is fortunate in being able to offer an unusual advantage. The Mariners Museum, seated in an 880-acre park, was established and endowed in 1930 by Archer M. Huntington, adopted son of Collis P. Huntington.

*This Museum is devoted to the
culture of the sea and its tributaries
its conquest by man and its influence
on civilization.*

Lake Maury, a converted waterway within the park confines, extends from a dam at the James River shore for several miles inland. Bridle paths wind in and around the park and provisions are made for recreation. Within the Museum building



COURTESY, THE MARINERS MUSEUM

Entrance to The Mariners Museum, founded and endowed by Archer M. Huntington, 1930. At right is heroic statue of Leifr Ericksson, son of Iceland, discoverer of Vinland (America), 1000 A.D.

is an educational display of objects and items relating to the sea, and, in connection, a Library is devoted to publications, maps and manuscripts on maritime subjects. For a student of any subject bearing upon the sea, research in this depository with its many rare volumes is expedited.

City Parks

At Huntington Park extending along the high bank of the James River there is a small lake, play equipment, ample space and provisions for picnic parties. Within the grounds is the War Memorial Museum of Virginia, which houses relics relating to conflicts in which the United States has been engaged since 1917. The museum also is the depository for the National Aeronautics and Space Administration.

Anderson Park bordering Hampton Roads marks the origin of a beautiful drive extending for several miles along Hampton Roads. Christopher Newport Park, overlooking the James River in downtown Newport News, is maintained as a flower garden.

Libraries

In addition to the aforementioned opportunities, the city maintains three libraries: The Newport News Public Library, Inc., founded privately in 1908 and now largely supported by municipal appropriation; the Main Street Library, which also originated privately, is maintained altogether by the city, as is the Library at the Dorie Miller Recreation Center for Negroes.

Music

In the field of music, the Peninsula Symphony Orchestra provides several concerts during a season, and the Peninsula Choral Society is an outlet for talented vocalists. The Newport News Operatic Society stages annually two full length operas using local talent, and the Community Concert Association brings to the area musicians from other centers.

Theater and Art

The Community Theater of the Virginia Peninsula stages yearly several productions, affording outlets for acting, staging, directing or merely viewing. Several artists with studios on the Peninsula contribute to the community's artistic development and appreciation through their work, their classes and art discussions.

Gardening

For the gardeners, there are innumerable clubs which center their activities in various localities. Of these, the Hampton Roads Garden Club might be termed the parent organization as it was the first established. Both this group and the Huntington Garden Club take an active part in assisting in Garden Week in Virginia, as well as staging flower shows. The Rose Society, affiliated with the national organization, has a membership devoted to rose culture and arranges semi-annual shows for display.

The diversity of the media for self-improvement as well as for recreation is so broad on the Peninsula that none need feel at a loss for outlets to pursue his interests.

N O T E S

1. Annual Report, 1959, City of Newport News, *Daily Press*, 31 January 1960, supplement.
2. Newport News War Memorial Recreation Building dedicated 7 October 1945; Dorie Miller Recreation Building for Negroes subsequently erected and dedicated; the two swimming pools, gifts of the Newport News Shipbuilding and Dry Dock Co., completed the summer of 1946 (*Newport News During the Second World War*, 108).
3. *The Mariners Museum 1930-1950 - A History and Guide* (Museum Publication No. 20, 1950)

Economic Strength

Harbor

THE strength of the economy of Newport News lies fundamentally in the magnificent harbor with which it has been endowed. A review of the history of the area will bear out this statement. In every national emergency with which this country has been faced since settlement, the finger of expediency invariably has pointed to the harbor at Newport News. Now, for more than three-quarters of a century it has been utilized by two strategically important private maritime enterprises. For a much longer period this gateway to the Atlantic has been deemed of primary importance from the standpoint of national defense, as demonstrated by its selection for military and naval operations in time of crises, and eventually for permanent installations.

Shipping and Shipbuilding

When the South began to emerge after the Civil War from its agrarian mode of life, Newport News was immediately chosen as an area for early industrialization of the southland. Here, after the terminus of the railroad was established and the Shipyard created, accompanying utilization of the harbor supplied in reserve potential facilities for defense in event of any impending conflict. At the same time, a world-wide trade began to flow through Newport News, as ships could come and go readily without having to await tide or tow. Shipbuilding, which three times in the past six or more decades has been called upon to adjust from peace to war, has steadily developed in flexibility. Today, progress in nuclear power finds the shipbuilding plant in the forefront of achievement for utilization of atomic power for ship propulsion.

Defense Installations

Around the harbor and adjacent thereto have been developed extensive defense installations: Fort Monroe, Langley Air

Force Base, the National Aeronautics and Space Administration in the adjacent city of Hampton, and Fort Eustis within the corporate limits of Newport News. Together with established industry, this vast concentration of defense activities in the strategically located area is attended by a resulting prosperity.

The consequent flourishing economy of the Peninsula has militated against an all-out effort to locate within the area additional private enterprise. This might be considered a serious defect in the general economy of the Peninsula.

New Industries

In recent years, however, the tendency to rely on established industry and defense installations has been somewhat corrected by the location in Newport News of the Union Carbide Ore Company, in adjoining York County of the refinery of the American Oil Company and the vast plant of the Virginia Electric and Power Company, and in James City County, adjoining Newport News on the north, by the location of the Dow Chemical Company. Now, efforts are constantly being made to bring to the area industries of this caliber. The country as a whole is being alerted to what the Peninsula has to offer.

Labor

A bulwark of strength in the economy of the Peninsula is its labor potential. The community, in contrast to sections to the north and west, is remarkably free of labor troubles. This is due in large measure to the homogeneity of the population with its long and substantial American background. In itself, the stabilization of labor militates to encourage economic growth.

Seafood Industry

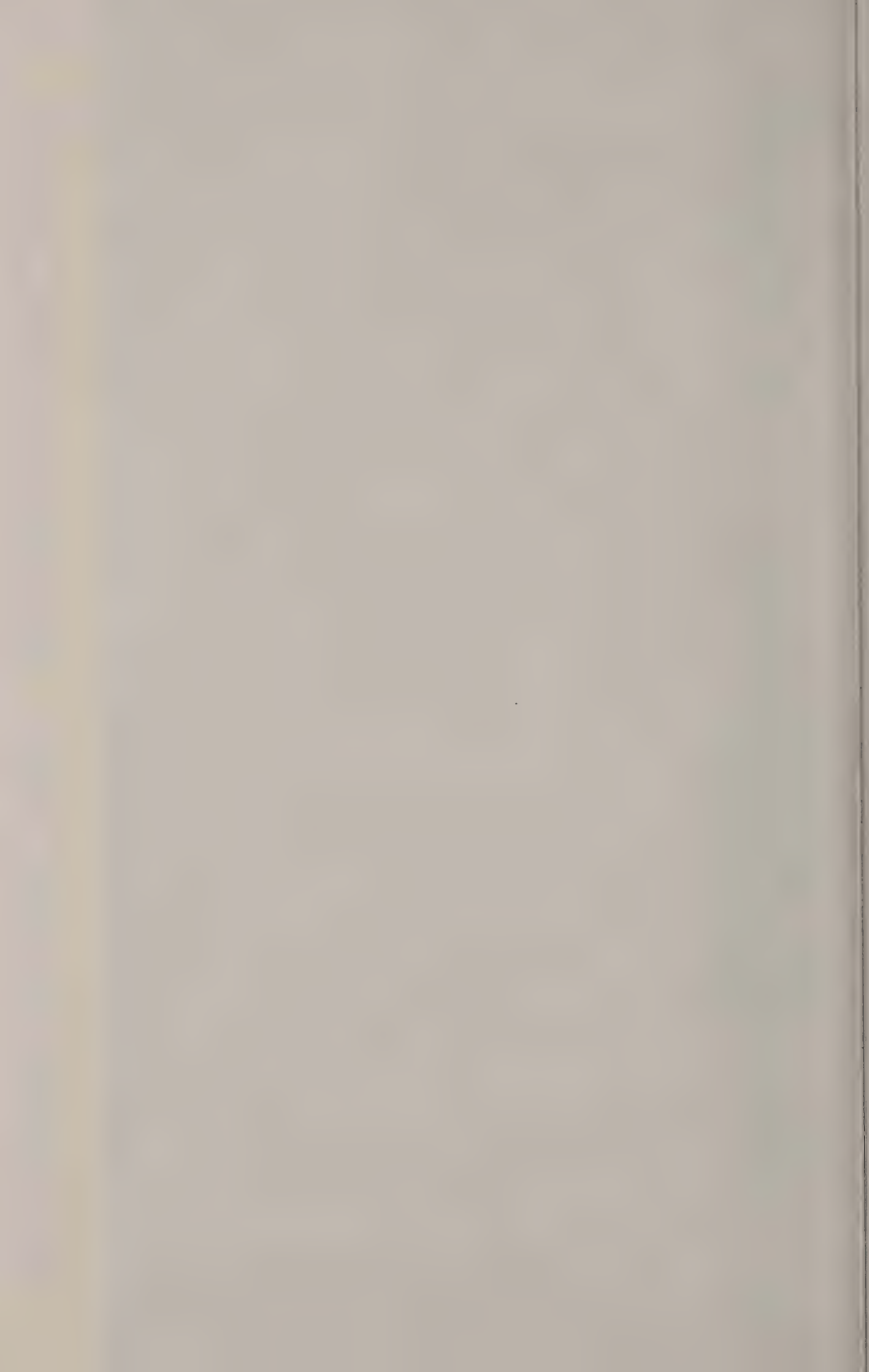
Two additional factors lend security to the economic strength of the area. The vast seafood industry with markets to all parts of the country has at its doors a wealth and seemingly inexhaustible source of supply in fish, crabs, oysters and clams. At



COURTESY, WVEC-TV

Queen Elizabeth II of England and her consort Prince Philip, upon arrival in the United States at Patrick Henry airport, Newport News, 16 October 1957, greet official Virginia welcoming party. The Queen

and party later paid an official visit to Jamestown and Williamsburg nearby, in commemoration of the establishment at Jamestown of the first permanent English speaking settlement in America, 13 May 1607.



home and abroad this choice fare is ever in demand, with resulting prosperity to many, some of whom initiated operations as boys by treading clams on the flats.

Back Country

The population of a large back country south of the James River finds its way to Newport News via the James River bridge linking southside Virginia counties, as well as the border areas of North Carolina, to the Peninsula. Likewise, the York River bridge connects Gloucester, Mathews, Essex, and Middlesex and beyond with York County and from there roads lead directly to Newport News. A large area, hitherto isolated from the Peninsula, now finds ready access, via the hard surfaced roads and swift passage of waterways afforded by connecting bridges. To make the trip complete, there is no parking problem. The people may visit innumerable shopping centers, and find in downtown Newport News a highly adequate system of parking lots, both free and metered.

Transportation

In addition to the railroad and two interstate bus lines serving the Peninsula, transportation in and out of the area is greatly expedited by means of three airlines operating from Patrick Henry airport. Located on a portion of the former Patrick Henry staging area, ample provision has been made for land for further extension of runways and operations. The airport serves Newport News, Hampton, York County and Williamsburg. Here, in October 1957, Queen Elizabeth II of England, with her husband Prince Philip and official party, received their first welcome to the United States on the occasion of their visit to Jamestown and Colonial Williamsburg.

The Future

\$15,000,000 Improvement Program

INEVITABLY, Newport News moves towards the fulfillment of a destiny for which its harbor was designed by nature. Conscious of a responsibility, the citizens of the community and the officials they elected have projected long range plans for general development. On the immediate agenda is a \$15,000,000 improvement program already approved. Of this sum \$6,000,000 is in revenue bonds for the expansion of the Newport News Waterworks system by tapping the Diascund Creek, in New Kent County. This project already beyond the planning stage, without cost to the taxpayer, will greatly enhance the supply of water both for industrial purposes and for domestic use.

Highways, Schools and Sanitary System

Of the remaining \$9,000,000, more than half is an obligation of the federal and state governments for highway improvements. These include the widening of route 60 (Warwick Boulevard) to a four-lane highway to extend as far as Minton Drive, the widening of route 168 to a six-lane highway between Forty-First and Main Streets, the construction of two underpasses, one at Main Street and the other at Center Avenue, and a second bridge at Twenty-Fifth Street.¹ A substantial portion of the cost of the underpasses and the bridge is to be borne by the Chesapeake and Ohio Railway. The \$4,000,000 bond issue floated to care for the city's share of the cost of improvements, also includes funds for the erection of four school buildings, additions to two existing buildings, and construction of trunk sewer lines and airport improvements.

The existence in the upper area of Newport News of a government sewer system led to negotiations and agreement on the part of the city to take over the facility.² Hence, Newport News

will be able to move far more rapidly and with far less expense than otherwise might be, towards completion of a general sanitary disposal system.

Redevelopment

The Newport News Redevelopment and Housing Authority, of which H. Wharton Blandford is the manager, has advanced negotiations for another program for the removal of out of date structures. In the area between Forty-First and Forty-Sixth Streets in the Washington Avenue to Warwick Boulevard section, the cleared land is to be used for an extensive parking lot, for industrial development and for additional recreational space adjacent to the Stonewall Jackson school. The prior redevelopment program was carried out in the Washington Avenue to Warwick Boulevard section between Twenty-Fourth and Twenty-Ninth Streets.³

Port Improvements

The State Ports Authority already has laid plans for general harbor and port development in the Hampton Roads area. While there is not, as yet, agreement as to participation of the Chesapeake and Ohio Railway in the state plan, legislative provision has been made for Newport News and the Chesapeake and Ohio to go ahead with their part of the program if they care to. At the same time, much of the equipment at the terminal is of the most modern design and serves effectively a growing maritime trade. The Chesapeake and Ohio is inaugurating on its own responsibility a program for increasing the flow of imports into Newport News. A plan is in operation whereby outbound cargo ladened ships do not return to port empty, as had been the case, particularly in coal carriers. Now they take on in foreign ports cargo such as the ore that has been flowing into the terminal for several years.

Area for Industrial Development

Likewise, the Chesapeake and Ohio Industrial Division is cooperating with Newport News and Hampton, which cities own jointly a vast acreage set aside for industrial development. This area, formerly a wartime emergency housing development, is already equipped with public utilities.

City Master Plan

The City's Planning Commission headed by Sinclair Phillips, and since April 1960 by John Irvine, with City Manager Joseph C. Biggins, Councilman J. Fred Christie, J. Cooper Lester, L. W. Kliewer, Albert T. Brout and John N. Meadows as members,⁴ has been studying for many months an overall design for the city — for its orderly commercial and industrial growth, its preservation of residential areas, its general beautification, and usefulness in the province of recreation. In this connection, the creation of a park out of the Salter's Creek marsh adjacent to the Boulevard section is already in the advanced planning stage with most of the land for the purpose acquired. There is also a consideration of another parkway to utilize grounds set aside for a watershed in the northern area of the city. This woodland lends itself particularly to the growth of certain plants indigenous to the southern tidewater area.

Private Schools

With the establishment of the Hampton Roads Academy heretofore mentioned, a serious growing interest in private secondary educational facilities is worthy of note. There have been in existence on the Peninsula for some years several excellent primary and lower grammar grade private schools, but until 1959 this system lacked a capstone.

N O T E S

1. Underpasses nearing completion, January 1961; bridge at 25th Street opened, November 1960.
2. Final agreement, December 1960.
3. Earlier redevelopment programs were in the Jefferson, Terminal and Ivy Avenues areas where low income families lived. Buildings, out of date and badly in need of repairs, were torn down and substantial dwelling units, available for rental at modest prices, erected. These now occupied by Negro families are under the supervision of the City's Redevelopment and Housing Authority.
4. Membership of the Advisory Committee to the Planning Commission, as follows: Lewis A. McMurran, Joe Richman, H. M. Hussey, Sr. L. B. Peterson, B. E. Rhodes, H. Wharton Blandford, Simpson Jarvis, W. T. Watkins, Sr.

Population

Citizens

THE measure of a community well may be in the caliber of its citizens. Despite the cosmopolitan aspect of the maritime city, Newport News numbers among its families many whose roots have been in the area for generations. At the same time, however, they are well mingled with citizens who are in the community by choice, having been attracted by opportunities for work in the technical and professional fields, and in highly skilled trades. This has proved a healthy situation for Newport News as is evident in the city's progress.

Census 1623

In 1623, a census of the population in the colony of Virginia showed 1199 persons. Of these 364 or approximately one-third were living in Elizabeth City Corporation along the waterways from Mulberry Island to Back River and on the south side of the present Hampton Roads.¹

Muster 1625

A muster of the inhabitants of Virginia taken January-February, 1625, listed 1232 persons. Of these 403 were living in the area described above, with 20 recorded at Newport's News and 30 on Mulberry Island.²

Rent Roll, 1704

The rent roll of 1704 for Warwick County records 121 land owners by name with acreage held by each, but does not give either number of persons in a family or the total population.³

State Enumeration 1782-85

The state enumeration based on the 1782-1785 tax list, shows 111 families in Warwick County with 586 white persons and 774 Negroes.⁴

U. S. Census

Beginning 1790, a U. S. census was taken every ten years. Not until 1850, however, was data given listing each individual by name, age, color, occupation, sex and amount of real estate owned. The enumeration for Virginia is missing. The compilation for the Virginia U. S. census is based on the state tax lists cited above.⁵

WARWICK COUNTY, INCLUDING NEWPORT NEWS ⁶		1920	11,417
		1930	8,829
		1940	9,248
		1950	39,875
1790	1,690		
1800	1,659		
1810	1,835		
1820	1,608		
1830	1,570		
1840	1,456		
1850	1,546		
1860	1,740		
1870	1,672		
1880	2,258		
1890	6,650		
		CITY OF NEWPORT NEWS	
		1896	(estimated) 12,000
		1900	19,635
		1910	20,205
		1920	35,596
		* 1930	34,417
		1940	37,067
		1950	42,358
WARWICK COUNTY		THE CONSOLIDATED CITY OF NEWPORT NEWS	
1900	4,888		
1910	6,041	1960	113,662

*In 1926, the area between Salter's Creek and Pear Avenue, lying along Hampton Roads in Elizabeth City County, with a population of 1,198 persons, and known as Kecoughtan, sought and was granted annexation to the city of Newport News.⁷

NOTES

1. John Camden Hotten, *The Original Lists of Persons of Quality and Others Who Went from Great Britain to the American Plantations 1600-1700* (New York, 1874), 182-184, 184-188.
2. Jester and Hiden, *Adventurers of Purse and Person*, 44-46, 48-66.
3. Thomas J. Wertenbaker, *The Planters of Colonial Virginia* (Princeton University Press, 1922), 208, 209.

4. See 1790 *U. S. Census*, which is based on this list.
5. See Chapter 9, note 6; two other enumerations for Warwick County are of interest; the census of 1634-35 gives 811 persons living in the area from Keith's (Skiffe's) Creek and Mulberry Island to Marie's Mount (Newport News Point) (J. B. Neill, *Virginia Carolorum*, 114, 115); extant Warwick County Court Orders, 1690-91, list 424 titheables.
6. Official *U. S. census* figures.
7. See *Fifteenth Census of the United States*, I (1930).

CHRONOLOGY—1607-1960

Chronology

1607 - 1960

Amended and revised from article, "Milestones in the History of Newport News-Warwick, 1607-1958," compiled by Alexander C. Brown and published in the *Daily Press*, June 29, 1958. By courtesy of the *Daily Press*.

1600

- 1607 May 2 — Capt. Christopher Newport, commanding the pioneer fleet of English merchantmen, the *Susan Constant*, *Godspeed*, and *Discovery*, passed Newport News Point on the way up the James River to establish the first permanent English colony at Jamestown.
- 1608 The site of Newport News is designated "Pernt Hope" on Capt. John Smith's celebrated map of Virginia (printed in 1612) matching "Poynt Comfort" on the lower end of the Peninsula.
- 1610 June 6 — Dispirited and starving settlers planning to leave Jamestown meet an advance party coming up the James River off Mulberry Island bringing the good news of succor afforded by the timely arrival of Lord De La Warr. The colony was thus saved and the settlers returned to Jamestown with new heart.
- 1617 June 17 — Governor Samuel Argall established four great divisions of the colony. Newport News originally was a part of the Corporation of Elizabeth City.
- 1619 November 11 — First mention of the name "Newportes Newes" appears in the records of the Virginia Company.
- 1621 March 10 — John Rolfe and others had "land on Mulberry Island Virginia" under cultivation.
November 22 — Arrival of Daniel Gookin and his party in the ship *Flying Harte* to found the Gookin "plantacione" at Newport News.
- 1622 March 22 — Newport News was defended by Daniel Gookin and 35 men following the Great Indian Massacre.
July — An early sale of land in Newport News was recorded as follows: "Mrs. Mary Tue, daughter of Hugh Crouch beinge the heire and Executrix of Lieutenant Richard Crouch did sett and assigne over in this Court 150 Acres of Land, which the said Lieutenant Crouch did bequeath unto her by the name of Mary Younge his sister, which land, was for their servants personall Adventures and lyes at Newporte Newes, the said land shee assigned to Mr. Daniell Gookin."
- 1624 August 14 — Edward Waters patented land on Waters Creek, now Lake Maury in the grounds of The Mariners Museum.

- Skiffes, or Keith's Creek named for the Rev. George Keith, also minister of Martin's Hundred Parish in James City County.
- 1625 The Rev. George Keith's 100-acre glebe located at Newport News on land presently near the Chesapeake and Ohio Railway Company's Pier No. 9.
Capt. Samuel Mathews seated on his land later known as Denbigh.
- 1627 Location of a Colonial church on Mulberry Island.
- 1630 Nutmeg Quarter Church located near Waters Creek.
- 1633 March 20 — Dutch navigator, Capt. De Vries, described the "fine spring" at "Newport Snuw" from which his ship obtained water, as was the customary practice with ships trading on the James. A storehouse for tobacco was built on the Warwick River plantation of Samuel Mathews.
- 1634 Creation of "Warwick River Shire" as one of Virginia's eight original counties. It took its name from Robert Rich, second Earl of Warwick, and a prominent member of the Virginia Company.
- 1643 March — Colonial Assembly described the boundaries of Warwick River Shire and shortened the name to Warwick County.
- 1661 Colonial Church at Oyster Point located near the site of the present Denbigh Baptist Church.
- 1667 June 4 — Dutch warships captured the British frigate *Elizabeth* in the James River off Newport News, using the ruse of flying British colors. They then overtook and made prizes of the rich tobacco fleet bound for England. Col. Miles Cary was killed in this battle. He was buried at Windmill Point, within the present Mennonite settlement on Lucas Creek, Warwick. The dates on his grave stone suggest that it is the earliest extant in Warwick.
- 1677 January — Joint royal commissioners "for settling the Grievances and affairs of Virginia" in the wake of Bacon's Rebellion met on the flagship *Bristol* off Newport News.
- 1680 Justice Miles Cary II of Warwick, owner of Richneck plantation near Oriana, held court, so tradition has it, under the so-called Warwick Court Elm on his property. The clerk's office was located at Richneck. Court was held here for many years.
Act of Assembly ordering establishment of towns. Authority given for purchase of 50 acres "in Warwick County at mouth of Deep Creek on Mr. Mathews' land."
- 1691 First courthouse and jail at Warwicktown ordered repaired.
- 1693 Justice Miles Cary II appointed a charter trustee of the College of William and Mary. He served as rector of the college, 1705-6.

1700

- 1700 November 2 — One of the earliest existing stones marking a grave in Warwick carries the following inscription: "Under this stone lyeth the Body of William Roscow, Gentleman, Who was born at Chorley, in the County of Lancashire, the 30th day of November Anno Dom: 1664, and departed this life at Blunt Point in ye County of Warwick, the 2d day of November, Anno Dom: 1700."
- 1704 Virginia Rent Roll of 1704 lists 125 parcels of land in Warwick, the largest land owners being Col. Dudley Digges, 4,626 acres; Col. Miles Cary II, 1,960 acres; and Col. Cole's orphans, 1,350 acres. Among the prominent Warwick families of the period were: Ranshaw, Roscow, Mountfort, Harwood, Lucas, Digges, Crew, Whitaker, Cary, Jones, Scasbrook, Wills, Llewellyn, and Cole.
- 1737 A seaman, who was in Virginia the year the notorious Blackbeard was taken, reported that a pirate treasure had been buried on Mulberry Island. Blackbeard was killed November 22, 1718 by Lieutenant Maynard and his head brought to Hampton where it was displayed on a pike at a point thereafter known as Blackbeard Point.
- 1755 February 19 — British General Braddock arrived in Hampton Roads on the frigate *Norrich* under command of Capt. Samuel Barrington, and landed on the shores on March 20. On March 9, HMS *Seahorse* under Capt. Hugh Pallister arrived with seven transports of troops. General Braddock and troops sailed for Alexandria, whence they marched across the country to Fort Duquesne.
- 1764 Richard Cary of Peartree Hall, Warwick, established on his plantation a botanical garden credited as being the most celebrated of its kind in the colonies.
- 1772 August 20 — Advertisement in the *Virginia Gazette* for the construction of the "Lower Church of Warwick Parish." Parts of the original structure existed until recently in the Denbigh Baptist Church. The original was completed in 1774; the church was reconstructed in 1898, added to in 1922-1923 and razed in 1960.
- 1776 May 15 — Adoption of the Virginia Declaration of Rights.
July 8 — Sloop *Lady Charlotte*, built at Newport News by Holder Hudgins, was used by British Colonial Governor Dunmore to resist Virginia Colonial land forces. Dunmore was routed at the Battle of Cricket Hill, Gwynns Island.

- 1780 Peninsula suffered from plundering of British warships based on Hampton Roads.
- 1781 May — Battle at Warwick Courthouse between a parole under Lt. Colonel Tarleton and a party of 400 militia with great loss to the Americans due to the surprise attack and a heavy fall of rain which prevented the militia from using their arms.
August — Virginia volunteers led by Capt. Edward Mallory routed members of a British foraging expedition in a running engagement from Waters Creek down to Newport News.
September 28 — George Washington and his forces, en route to besiege Yorktown, stopped at Harwood-Curtis family plantation house, End View, which still is occupied.
October 19 — Surrender of Lord Cornwallis at Yorktown.
- 1790 First official U. S. census taken. Virginia compilation destroyed and later compiled from Virginia tax lists, gave Warwick a population of 1,690.

1800

- 1809 Reestablishment of Warwick County seat at Stony Run, Denbigh, on main road connecting the Lower Peninsula with Williamsburg.
- 1810 November — Second Warwick Courthouse erected at Denbigh. It was used as the Warwick County Clerk's Office until June 1958 and in 1961 was adapted to serve as a public library.
- 1812 War of 1812 brings depredations to Lower Peninsula residents at the hands of British foraging parties.
- 1816 Steamboat *Powhatan* was the first regularly to ply the James River. Until docks were built at Newport News, persons desiring to take passage on the early steamboats flagged them from the shore and a boat would be sent in to pick them up.
- 1831 January 1 — Newport News Farm acquired by Parker West, whose home was located on the waterfront half way between Newport News Point and 18th St.
- 1848 Richard Decauter Lee began erection of his plantation home at Oak Grove, renamed Lee Hall, at great house warming, 1859, upon completion.
- 1851 U. S. Post Office first established at "New Port News" at the foot of Bennett's Wharf. Discontinued in 1854, it was not permanently activated until the 1880's.
- 1861 May 25 — Reconnaissance of Newport News area by Union General Benjamin F. Butler, followed two days later by occupation of

Newport News Point by a Union force of some 2,000 men. Establishment of Camp Butler with earthworks and batteries commanding the James River. Pillaging of surrounding country begins. June 10 — First land engagement of the Civil War was fought at Big Bethel between Confederate defenders under Col. John Bankhead Magruder and Union forces under General Ebenezer Pierce. Detachments of Federal troops advanced from Fort Monroe and Camp Butler. The Union forces were repulsed.

June 29 — "A new Sawyer gun [rifled] recently put in position in our water battery" at Newport News was fired five times at Pig Point. The shot fell short, landing in the shallow water near the Point, according to account in diary of Pvt. Johnson of the 9th N. Y. Volunteers (Hawkins' Zouaves). The gun later blew up.

August 31 — Confederate gunboat *Teaser* shells Newport News.

September 13 — Confederate steamer *Yorktown* shells Newport News.

- 1862 March 8 — Confederate Ironclad *Virginia* (former U. S. steam frigate *Merrimack*) rammed and sank U. S. frigate *Cumberland* off Newport News. USS *Congress* also attacked off Salters Creek and destroyed by the *Virginia*.

March 9 — Celebrated duel between the CSS *Virginia* and the USS *Monitor* in Hampton Roads ended in a draw.

March 13 — Six companies of infantry from Newport News rout Confederate cavalry.

April 16 — The Battle of Dam No. 1, or Lee's Mill near Lee Hall, was the opening engagement of what was officially designated as the Peninsular Campaign.

July 7 — General Ambrose E. Burnside arrives at Newport News. The Confederate stronghold of Fort Crawford on Mulberry Island marked the western anchor of a defense line stretching across the Peninsula to Yorktown. The line was abandoned by Confederate General Joseph E. Johnson prior to the Battle of Williamsburg, May 5, 1862.

- 1864 April 9 — Confederate torpedo boat *Squib* explodes torpedo against hull of Union Flagship *Minnesota* off Newport News.

- 1864 Confederate cruiser *Florida*, former command of Capt. John N. Maffit, builder in 1853 of the residence at the foot of present Cedar Lane in Warwick known as the "Doug Smith House," was rammed and sunk off C&O Pier 2. The *Florida* was captured on October 7, 1864, in the harbor of Bahia, Brazil, by USS *Wachusett* in defiance of neutrality rules and brought to Newport News.

Brazil made diplomatic protests for the return of the *Florida*, but before this could be carried out the ex-Confederate commerce raider was "accidentally" sunk at her moorings.

- 1865 April 9 — Surrender of General Lee at Appomattox ushered in notorious Reconstruction period on the Lower Peninsula as elsewhere throughout the South.

April — Establishment of prisoner of war camp at Newport News, 25 acres surrounded by 12-foot fence. Camp vacated by August 2.

- 1867 The congregation of the First Baptist Church (Colored) worshipped in three locations prior to the coming of the railroad. The first services were held in old army barracks located on the site later occupied by the Casino park. As membership expanded, services were held in a section known as Dawson City near the present gas works. Then a frame church building was erected on the present site of the 28th Street bridge and the railroad tracks. When the line was laid out, the Old Dominion Land Company gave the church its present site on Jefferson Avenue and 23rd Street in exchange.

- 1873 Surveys made to determine the course of the projected railroad line extension down the Peninsula to deep water.

- 1875 James M. Curtis elected Warwick County treasurer.

- 1880 March 4 — The Virginia General Assembly authorized the Chesapeake and Ohio Railway, under the presidency of Collis P. Huntington, to construct a railroad line from Richmond to Newport News, and to acquire waterfront property at Newport News to establish a deep water terminal and piers.

October 19 — The Old Dominion Land Company was chartered for the purpose of acquiring and selling land. The "village" of Newport News was laid out on 25-foot lots. Building began immediately.

The Lafayette House, the first hotel erected in Newport News, at Lafayette (Huntington) Avenue and 27th Street. Later it served as the city's first hospital and afterwards was used as a boys' military school.

- 1881 March — First religious services for white worshippers held at a Union Chapel on 27th Street near West Avenue.

Old Dominion Land Company donated sites of the city's first schools — the 28th Street school for whites and the 22nd Street school for Negroes.

October 16 — Completion of the Peninsula Division of the C&O with ceremonial driving of the "golden spike" in the Magazine

field above Williamsburg, thus affording continuous rail line from Richmond to Newport News.

October 19 — First passenger train departed from Newport News en route to the Centennial Celebration grounds at Yorktown via temporary tracks laid from Lee Hall.

- 1882 May 1 — Regular passenger service on the Peninsula Division was inaugurated.

The Virginia Navigation Company's steamer *Ariel* plying the James River between Norfolk and Richmond commenced making stops at Newport News. The line was inaugurated in 1878.

- 1883 April 11 — Gala opening of the Hotel Warwick, West Avenue at 24th Street.

April 21 — Publication of the first issue of *The Wedge* — Newport News' first newspaper.

- 1884 New Warwick County Courthouse erected at Denbigh.

- 1886 January 28 — Incorporation of the Chesapeake Dry Dock and Construction Company, parent organization of the Newport News Shipbuilding and Dry Dock Company.

Steamboat *Louise* acquired by the C&O Railway to make passenger connection between Newport News and Norfolk. Used until the arrival of the steamboat *Virginia* in 1902.

- 1888 Removal of seat of government of Warwick from Denbigh to Newport News.

December 1 — The Bank of Newport News organized in the Hotel Warwick. This became the First National Bank.

- 1889 April 24 — Ceremonial opening of Newport News' first dry dock with the docking of U.S. Monitor *Puritan*, then the most powerful naval vessel.

August 8 — Newport News Light and Water Company chartered.

- 1890 February 17 — Chesapeake Dry Dock and Construction Company was renamed the Newport News Shipbuilding and Dry Dock Company.

February 28 — Newport News Street Railway Company incorporated under the presidency of Col. Carter M. Braxton to provide the city's first public transportation system, first with horse-drawn and later electric trolley cars.

Summer — Large section of downtown Newport News destroyed by fire which burned all but one building in the block between 27th and 28th Streets, and Washington and Lafayette Avenues. Volunteer fire unit organized the following year.

- 1891 Newport News Middle Ground Lighthouse established in Hampton Roads.
 April 30 — Delivery of the first vessel built by the Newport News Shipyard, the steam tug *Dorothy*, destined for New York harbor duty. Renamed the *J. Alvah Clark*, Newport News Shipyard's Hull No. 1 is still in operation in the Hampton Roads area.
 The Subscription Library Association was founded in Newport News.
 October 16 — First water pipes laid in Newport News connecting with the new Lee Hall reservoir.
- 1892 March 16 — Launching of the iron freighter *El Sud*, first ocean-going steamship built at Newport News.
 Newport News Home Guard Unit, the Huntington Rifles, activated.
 New Warwick County Courthouse completed on the corner of 25th Street and Lafayette (later Huntington) Avenue.
- 1893 The steamboat *Pocahontas* replaced the *Ariel* on the James River run and was long a feature of the Newport News waterfront.
 International Naval Rendezvous staged on Hampton Roads, April and May. U. S. warships moored off Newport News Point.
 September 10 — C&O Railway Company established a steamship line connecting Newport News with European ports. First sailing of S.S. *Rappahannock* for Liverpool.
- 1894 January — The Shipyard signed its first contract with the U. S. Government calling for the construction of three gunboats.
 April 4 — The Shipyard certified its first apprentice.
 Newport News Seminary for girls established by Mrs. W. W. Harwood in a brick building, still standing, in the 200 block of 29th Street. The school was in existence until 1902.
- 1895 June 15 — First vessel named *Newport News* delivered by the Shipyard to the Norfolk and Washington Steamboat Company. She ran on the Chesapeake Bay and the Potomac for 25 years.
- 1896 January 4 — The *Daily Press*, already in publication, issued under newly formed stock company.
 January 16 — Newport News withdrew from Warwick County and was incorporated as a city of the first class in Virginia, with W. A. Post as first mayor.
 April 28 — The Old Dominion passenger liner *Wyanoke* was rammed and sunk in the James River off Newport News in a pre-dawn collision with the U. S. Cruiser *Columbia*. Several lives were lost.

- 1897 March — Daniel Shenk, Ohio Mennonite, laid foundation for 1,200-acre Mennonite Colony site on Warwick River.
- 1898 March 24 — The Newport News Shipyard's first capital ships, the battleships *Kearsarge* and *Kentucky*, were launched one after the other during a period of mounting tension following the destruction of the USS *Maine* in Havana the month before.
- April 21 — The Newport News-built gunboat *Nashville*, first U. S. naval vessel built here, fired the first shot of the Spanish-American War.
- Summer — Port facilities at Newport News were taken over by the government with establishment of a military port of embarkation. The Virginia Pilot Association, organized in 1865, establishes an office in Newport News.
- 1899 Erection of Newport News' first modern school on the 200 block between 31st and 32nd Streets. This was renamed the John W. Daniel School in 1908 and was badly burned June 3, 1913. The third floor served as the high school of the city.
- August 1 — A yellow fever scare, originating at the Old Soldiers Home in Phoebus, spread great alarm through the Peninsula and a quarantine boundary was set up between Newport News and Elizabeth City County. There was a tremendous exodus from the Peninsula by boat and by train, leaving Newport News, as residents fled the area. The illness was later said to have been caused by polluted water from a cistern invaded by poisoned rats.

1900

- 1900 The former residential area of Newport News in the vicinity of River Road and 18th Street, deteriorated to live up to its unsavory nickname — Hell's Half Acre.
- February 14 — Newport News General Hospital authorized by act of the Virginia General Assembly. This hospital was installed in the Hotel Lafayette building, 27th Street and Lafayette Avenue in 1903. It was closed August 1, 1907. The site is marked by a bronze plaque installed in 1960.
- August 13 — Death of Collis P. Huntington, founder of the modern city of Newport News and the Shipyard. In 1903, in his honor, Lafayette Avenue was renamed Huntington Avenue by order of the City Council.

- 1904 St. James Sanitorium was located on 54th Street.
Construction of Federal Building, 25th Street and West Avenue, and relocation of Newport News Post Office in new quarters.
- 1906 April 25 — The Shipyard delivers its fifth battleship to the Navy, the proud 15,000-ton USS *Virginia*.
Dr. Joseph T. Buxton opened a hospital on the Boulevard, then outside Newport News city limits. The Elizabeth Buxton Hospital is now Mary Immaculate Hospital.
- 1907 Summer — Celebration of the Jamestown Tercentenary Exposition.
- 1908 January 11 — Newport News Chamber of Commerce organized. St. Francis Hospital was located at 35th Street and West Avenue. The July issue of "The Sailors' Magazine and Seamen's Friend" cited the deplorable conditions on the local waterfront in an article entitled "Crimping at Newport News." Crimping, like shanghaiing, was the practice of virtually enslaving sailors by signing them on board ships when drunk or drugged. The conditions were centered in the area known as "Hell's Half Acre."
- 1913 City purchased 75 acres at Newport News Creek, which was dredged and bulkheaded to create the Municipal Boat Harbor.
- 1914 Curtis Flying Field established following outbreak of World War I. The Peninsula's first "airport" was located on flat land east of the Municipal Boat Harbor. Canadian pilots were trained for duty abroad. Well known American flyers, Eddie Stinson, Billy Mitchell and others, used facilities at the field.
- 1915 May 7 — The British S. S. *Lusitania* sunk by German U-boat. Shipyard president A. L. Hopkins was lost with 123 other Americans. He was succeeded by Homer L. Ferguson.
September 4 — C&O Railway Company's grain elevator "A" destroyed by fire.
December 2 — Charter granted to incorporate the Newport News General and Non-Sectarian Hospital Association. The hospital was located in a three-story building on the north side of 50th Street, between Washington and Huntington Avenues. In April of 1927 the present name of Riverside Hospital came into being. The building has had many additions.
- 1917 April 6—United States entered World War I on the side of the Allies. Tremendous expansion in industry and housing in Newport News.
Local Chapter American Red Cross organized.
July 11 — Headquarters of Hampton Roads Port of Embarkation established at Newport News.

July 30 — Construction of barracks at Camp Stuart commenced. Completion of camp with hospital, delousing and other facilities completed in December 1917.

Winter — Severe weather and low temperatures plagued the Peninsula. Ice clogged Hampton Roads and the James River, interfering with shipping.

1918 January — U.S. Shipping Board Emergency Fleet Corporation commenced the construction of 500 homes in Warwick County on site of Hilton Farm. This became Hilton Village.

January 17 — First embarkment made by Hampton Roads Port of Embarkation. During World War I the port handled 145 transports and vast quantities of men and materiel, including horses and mules, were shipped overseas.

The Riverside Apartments, consisting of four large buildings of 332 apartments, were erected facing Washington Avenue between 45th and 49th Streets.

Establishment of U.S. Army Camps Hill, Alexander and Morrison.

March 7 — Camp Eustis established. Construction of facilities began in April. Remained in use as a camp until January 10, 1923, when it was redesignated Fort Eustis.

July 4 — Liberty Launching Day at the shipyard. Three destroyers were launched — the USS *Thomas*, *Haraden* and *Abbot*.

Autumn — Severe epidemic of influenza swept the Peninsula and the nation at large bringing heavy mortality.

November — Southern Shipyard established at Newport News Point. This yard was in operation, building and repairing ships of all types and sizes, until 1934.

November 11 — Armistice Day.

1919 April 13 — Dedication of Victory Arch, spanning 25th Street at West Avenue. The arch was built by popular subscription in honor of returning doughboys. The inscription it carries, penned by Robert G. Bickford, is: "Greetings with love to those who return — a triumph with tears to those who sleep."

August 22 — Closing of Camp Stuart Hospital and final processing of returning troops at the port.

August 25 — The Braxton Perkins Post 25, American Legion, was founded at Newport News.

1920 April 12 — Keel laying of Battleship *West Virginia* at the Newport News Shipyard. This illustrious ship was commissioned December 1, 1923, was sunk by Japanese sneak attack on Pearl Harbor, December 7, 1941, was salvaged, rebuilt and returned to

- active duty with the fleet July 4, 1944. She was finally inactivated June 18, 1946 and subsequently scrapped.
- September 1 — Newport News adopted a City Manager-Council form of government abandoning outmoded bicameral form. First mayor under the new government was Philip W. Hiden.
- 1921 Hilton Village offered for sale by the U. S. Shipping Board. Purchased by the Newport News Land Corporation. Homes offered for private ownership in 1922.
- 1922 The first shipments of tobacco from Newport News were commenced by the Hiden Storage and Forwarding Company which was established that year using surplus government warehouses at Morrison and Newport News.
- February 6 — Conclusion of the Washington Conference for the limitation of Armaments. This dictated the scrapping of incompleated naval vessels and the cancellation of contracts for others. During 1922-1923 the battleship *Iowa*, 31.8 per cent completed by the Newport News Shipyard, was demolished.
- 1923 The Newport News Shipyard entered the field of water turbine construction. The first hydraulic turbines were built for the Virginia Railway and Power Locks Station, Richmond.
- The Shipyard undertakes the building of railway freight cars in order to provide employment for its work force.
- The American Legion Museum of World War I relics was founded through the instigation of Major George B. Collings.
- May 17 — The Virginia General Assembly met at the Warwick Hotel and later visited the Shipyard to inspect the giant liner *Leviathan* then being reconverted to a passenger ship having served as a transport in World War I.
- October 9 — First radio broadcast made from a Newport News radio station, call letters WNEW.
- 1924 October 20 — The deed for Huntington Park was signed. About 40 acres were donated to the City by the Old Dominion Land Company and the C&O Railway. A stream running through the park was dammed and the resultant lake became known as Lake Biggins, after City Manager Joseph C. Biggins. The park was named for Henry E. Huntington, a principal owner of the Shipyard and nephew of founder Collis P. Huntington.
- 1926 Newport News City Council negotiated the purchase of the Newport News Light and Water Company, and the Newport News Waterworks Commission was authorized under a special act of the General Assembly.

March 20 — The multiple launching of some nine vessels in one day set a record never before equalled at the Newport News Shipyard. Some 30,000 visitors witnessed the launching of the Merchants and Miners Liner *Dorchester*, the yachts *Savarona*, *Josephine*, and *Aras*, the dredge *Raymond*, one car float, and three barges for the C&O Railway. Three new keels were laid on the same day.

1927 May — The Colony Inn was opened at Hilton Village at Main Street and Warwick Road by the Newport News Land Corporation. The Bank of Warwick now occupies the site of the former pleasant residential hotel, long a landmark of the Village.

1928 Old Dominion Golf Course opened on the site of World War I Camp Stuart. The course was maintained until 1940.

November 17 — Opening of the lift draw span of the James River Bridge connecting Warwick and Isle of Wight Counties, four and a half miles across the James River, was effected with pomp and ceremony. This was described as "a great day for Newport News." The bridge was then the longest in the world.

November 20 — The local radio station adopted the call signal WGH — "World's Greatest Harbor."

1929 October 14 — The Newport News Public Library, Inc., was installed in its handsome new Georgian-style building on West Avenue.

October 24 — "Black Thursday." Stock Market panic launches nation on "Great Depression," subsequently bringing hard times to the Peninsula.

1930 May — The Horace E. Dodge Boat and Plane Corporation erected facilities on a 100-acre tract fronting Hampton Roads east of the Municipal Boat Harbor at the foot of Marshall Avenue and began building speed-boats. The plant is now occupied by the Arkell Safety Bag Company.

June 2 — The Mariners Museum, founded by Archer M. Huntington, then principal owner of the Newport News Shipyard, was chartered by the Virginia State Legislature and began acquiring some 880 acres in Warwick fronting on the James River to establish a park and a museum "Devoted to the Culture of the Sea and its Tributaries, Its Conquest by Man, and Its Influence on Civilization."

1931 First Newport News Little Theater Group organized.
Mulberry Island used by the U.S. Army Air Corps as a bombing range up to 1941.

The Community Concert Association, organized by Mrs. L. C. Branch and others the year before, presented its first concert featuring the renowned baritone Nelson Eddy.

- 1932 January 7 — Lake Maury, a 167-acre artificial lake created by building a dam across the mouth of Waters Creek in the park of The Mariners Museum, was named in honor of Confederate Commodore Matthew Fontaine Maury, world-famous oceanographer nicknamed "Pathfinder of the Seas."

July 2 — Opening of the golf course at the new James River Country Club by the ceremonial teeing off by Newport News industrialist L. U. Noland. The club acquired extensive farm lands in Warwick on the James River.

A Golf Museum provided by Archer M. Huntington with exhibits collected by John C. Campbell was opened in a special wing of the James River Country Club.

- 1933 The Newport News Shipyard's Hydraulic Laboratory and model towing basin was established opposite the buildings of The Mariners Museum.

February 25 — The USS *Ranger* (CV-4), first aircraft carrier so designed and built from the keel up, was launched by the Shipyard as first of a long and illustrious line of naval vessels of this type.

August 23 — A violent hurricane swept the Peninsula doing some \$3 million worth of damages. Despite loss of all electric power, the *Times-Herald*, in an abridged tabloid form printed by hand, appeared that afternoon on schedule.

- 1934 September 8 — The Ward Line S.S. *Morro Castle*, built by the Shipyard in 1930, was destroyed by fire off the New Jersey coast and beached, a total wreck, off Asbury Park. The disaster ushered in the complete fireproof construction of subsequently built vessels here and elsewhere.

November 8 — The C&O grain elevator "B" was totally destroyed in a spectacular fire.

- 1935 February — The Newport News Operatic Society's first production of "H.M.S. Pinafore."

The large equestrian statue, "Conquering the Wild," by Anna Hyatt Huntington (Mrs. Archer M.) placed in The Mariners Museum park overlooking the dam and Lake Maury. This is a memorial to Collis Potter Huntington (1821-1900) and is inscribed: "Founder of the Shipyard. Through his undertaking this Museum and Park became a possibility and a reality, 1930."

- 1936 July — The Newport News City Armory was opened in a new building at 29th Street and Virginia Avenue.
- 1938 The Noland Company, which began in 1922 and had grown to great prominence in the plumbing business through the southeast, moved into its present establishment at 26th Street and Virginia Avenue.
- 1939 January 16 — Establishment of the Newport News Redevelopment and Housing Authority for the purpose of eliminating slum areas and civic betterment and beautification.
Enormous defense housing was planned to handle the rapidly spiraling population of the Peninsula. Largest such projects were Ferguson Park (1,200 units) located on a tract near the James River Bridge entrance; Copeland Park (3,195 units) and New-some Park (1,591 units) in Newport News East End and Elizabeth City County.
- 1940 July 27 — Delivery of the U.S. Lines passenger steamship *America*, 723-foot flagship of the U.S. Merchant Marine. The *America* was then the largest and finest ship built by an American shipyard.
August 12 — The Huntington family disposed of its interests in the Newport News Shipbuilding and Dry Dock Company which was reorganized as a stock company, listed on the New York Stock Exchange and described in a prospectus of that date.
- 1941 The War Memorial Museum of Virginia, founded by Major George B. Collings as the American Legion Museum in 1923, opened in a new building located in Huntington Park and displayed a noteworthy collection of World War I relics. Additions to the building were made in 1953-54 and the collections vastly augmented with the addition of World War II and Korean War material making the museum of national prominence.
February 3 — The Huntington Rifles, a National Guard unit, was mobilized for service with the Army.
February 3 — The North Carolina Shipbuilding Company was organized by the Newport News Shipyard as a subsidiary with key officers provided by the local company. A shipbuilding plant was erected on the Cape Fear River below Wilmington, N. C., which built a total of 243 emergency ships, beginning with Liberty ships. The plant operated until 1946.
March — Power was first produced by the Grand Coulee Dam, "the largest bulk project ever constructed by man," a project of the U. S. Department of the Interior on the Columbia River. Fifteen

of the 18 turbine units, the most powerful hydro-electric units ever constructed, were built by the Newport News Shipyard. The first award of three units was made in 1938, the balance was delayed until the end of World War II.

Stuart Gardens, to consist of 980 units, was commenced on the site of old World War I Camp Stuart fronting on Hampton Roads. The U. S. Army again assumed jurisdiction of Fort Eustis. Initially the fort was used as a replacement training center for the Coast Artillery and subsequently was made a prisoner of war camp.

December 7 — The Peninsula was electrified by the news of the Japanese bombing of Pearl Harbor. The Newport News-built flagship, U.S. Battleship *Pennsylvania*, was damaged in dry dock but subsequently repaired to take an important role in World War II.

- 1942 April 18 — The Newport News-built aircraft carrier *Hornet* launched General Jimmy Doolittle's 16 planes making a surprise bombing of Tokyo.

June 16 — Activation of the Hampton Roads Port of Embarkation by the U.S. Army with headquarters at Newport News.

July 31 — Launching of the U.S. aircraft carrier *Essex* ("The Fightingest Ship"), first of her class of which 9 were built by the Newport News shipyard. These carriers, organized into fast carrier task forces, were instrumental in bringing the war in the Pacific to a successful conclusion.

December 2 — Camp Patrick Henry, a 1,700-acre port staging area connected by railroad with the Hampton Roads Port of Embarkation facilities.

- 1943 The new building of the Whitaker Memorial Hospital for Negroes was dedicated. This important hospital project dated back to 1912.

June 3 — Embarkation of the 45th Division at Newport News for transport to North Africa to participate in Operation "Husky," the assault on the island of Sicily.

- 1945 January 1 — Warwick County adopted a county manager form of government and moved its headquarters from Lee Hall to Hilton Village where extensive government buildings and shops were erected on Main Street near the railway right-of-way.

March 19 — The U.S. Aircraft carrier *Franklin* ("Big Ben"), launched by the Shipyard on October 14, 1943, survived after becoming a raging inferno following Japanese bombing during the battle of Leyte Gulf. The ship subsequently returned to New

York under her own power — a tribute to the integrity of her construction.

March 26 — Newport News' new and modern Public Safety Building with police offices and jail was first occupied.

April 1 — The Citizens Rapid Transit Company was formed and took over existing local trolley and bus services.

May 8 — V-E Day and the surrender of Germany terminated the war in Europe.

June 11 — The Newport News City Council authorized the preparation of an official history of the community in World War II.

September 1 — Deactivation of the Hampton Roads Port of Embarkation which had handled 1,687,000 personnel during the war — embarkees, debarkees and prisoners. The rail and dock facilities were returned to the C&O Railway January 15, 1946.

September 2 — This date, officially designated V-J Day, terminated World War II.

1946 January 14 — Last run of the Peninsula electric street railway cars, followed by removal of all trolley car tracks.

February 1 — Fort Eustis was taken over by the Chief of Transportation and was established as an Army Services Forces Training Center. Replacement of temporary facilities with permanent construction.

February — Arrival in New York of the U. S. Navy Transport *West Point*, former Newport News-built passenger liner *America*. During the war the *West Point* made 14 round the world voyages and carried some 350,000 passengers. She returned to Newport News for reconversion to a luxury liner.

Summer — Two large municipal swimming pools, gift of the Shipyard to the community, were opened in Newport News East End.

October 13-19 — Celebration of Newport News Golden Anniversary with appropriate parades, pageant, and the publication of a commemorative volume entitled *Newport News' 325 Years*.

1947 February 1 — Naval Reserve Armory dedicated at Essex Street and Warwick Road.

March 6 — Christening of U.S. Heavy Cruiser *Newport News* at the Shipyard. A handsome silver service, gift of the people of the community was presented to the ship on January 29, 1949.

May — The Peninsula Airport Commission acquired a tract of 924 acres at Camp Patrick Henry to serve as the site for a proposed Peninsula Airport.

Autumn — Organization of the Peninsula Orchestra by talented local musician Cary McMurran.

December 16 — The C&O Railway obtained a building permit for the construction of a new \$5,200,000 coal pier.

December 21 — Newport News' World War II USO Casino Club on 26th Street closed after a long career of entertaining service men.

1948 July 22 — Work commenced on the construction at 25th and Huntington Avenue of a new courthouse on the site of the recently razed old building. The fine new courthouse was occupied in April, 1950.

1949 April 18 — Keel of the supercarrier *United States* was laid at Newport News. The construction contract was cancelled by Defense Secretary Louis Johnson eight days later on April 26.

September 1 — Patrick Henry Hospital for the Chronically Ill was opened in Warwick on the site of Camp Patrick Henry.

November 13 — Dedication of the Patrick Henry Airport serving the Lower Peninsula and Williamsburg. Service was inaugurated by Capital and Piedmont Airlines with DC-3 planes.

November 28 — The City Council of Newport News authorized the construction of a yacht basin at Salters Creek. This stream was named for pioneer settler Robert Salford in 1611. The improvement was subsequently named the Roy Peterson Yacht Basin after the late councilman, who had sponsored it, and was substantially completed in June 1950.

1950 August 21 — The importance of Fort Eustis was recognized by its being designated the Transportation Training Command Center.

September 11 — The Speech School of the Hampton Roads Service League (now the Junior League) was opened to aid defective children.

December 8 — Opening of the Armed Forces Service Club in the Newport News Armory.

1951 June 24 — Christening of the 990-foot passenger liner *United States*, largest and finest merchant ship built in this country.

July — The C&O Railway steamer *Virginia*, "Smokey Joe," which had served the harbor since 1902 providing service between Newport News and Norfolk, was towed away to Baltimore to be scrapped. Passenger buses had been substituted for this time-honored, across Hampton Roads boat service.

1952 May 1 — The Elizabeth Buxton Hospital was taken over by the

Bernardine Sisters of St. Francis and renamed the Mary Immaculate Hospital.

June 10 — Faced by threats of annexation by Newport News, the citizens of Warwick County voted to change their county into a city.

July 16 — The City of Warwick became incorporated as a city of the first class with 52,000 population. George T. Abernathy was the first mayor.

July 15 — The liner *United States* largest, finest and fastest ship ever built in America, returned to New York after record-breaking maiden voyages across the Atlantic. The *United States* won for the first time in a century the coveted Blue Ribbon of the Atlantic. Her eastbound time was 3 days, 10 hours and 40 minutes; westbound was 3 days, 12 hours, 12 minutes. She averaged better than 34 knots.

1953 March 14 — The C&O Railway completed dieselization of its system. The last steam locomotive, a Hudson, No. 494, pulled the last steam propelled train from Newport News.

November 14 — The Atomic Energy Commission announced that the Newport News Shipyard was playing an important part in the government's atomic powered ships program.

1954 March 22 — The new Warwick City Library building was opened. The library, a project of the Woman's Club of Hilton Village, began in 1936.

October 15 — Hurricane "Hazel" swept the Peninsula doing considerable damage.

November 11 — Dedication of \$100,000 addition to the War Memorial Museum in Huntington Park. Funds were supplied by the Commonwealth of Virginia through the offices of Charles K. Hutchens. The museum is the official depository of the National Advisory Committee for Aeronautics, Langley Field.

December 7 — Dedication of the Felker Heliport at Fort Eustis. This facility was the first experimental airport in the country expressly designed for helicopters.

December 11 — Launching of the USS *Forrestal*, first of the thousand-foot supercarriers of the U.S. Navy.

1955 May — June — Citizens Committees formed to explore the possibilities of a three-way merger of the cities of Hampton, Newport News and Warwick.

May 27 — The C&O Railway's \$8 million, 711-foot ore pier No. 9 was commenced.

- October 7 — The Shipyard announced its projected new facility for atomic research at Idaho Falls.
- October 11 — Esso Bunker Terminal dedicated at Newport News Point.
- December 17 — Opening of the August F. Crabtree Collection of exquisite ship models at The Mariners Museum.
- 1956 March 10 — The Tri-City Consolidation Bill won approval in the Virginia General Assembly but Norfolk interests succeeded in prohibiting the use of the popular name "City of Hampton Roads" in the proposed consolidation of Hampton, Newport News and Warwick.
- May 3 — Official opening of the extensive Newmarket Shopping Center in Warwick.
- November 6 — Hampton voters defeated the plan for a consolidated city covering the entire lower Peninsula.
- 1957 May 2 — Ceremonial reenactment of the landing of Capt. Christopher Newport at the Casino Ground, Newport News, from reconstructions of his three ships, the *Susan Constant*, *Godspeed*, and *Discovery*, as part of the Virginia 350th Anniversary observances. Dedication of Christopher Newport Park and the unveiling of a large mural painting by Allan Jones, Jr., in the Newport News Public Library depicting the original event.
- July 16 — Citizens of Newport News and Warwick vote to form one city. In Newport News: 4,398 for, 873 against; in Warwick: 3,939 for, 3,253 against.
- August 7 — Sir Cullem Welch, Lord Mayor of London, paid an official visit to the City of Newport News and was entertained at the James River Country Club.
- August 27 — The Peninsula United Fund came into being to coordinate all local charity work. The first campaign began in October and achieved unprecedented goals.
- September 10 — Voters elected that the name of the consolidated city should be Newport News.
- November 1 — The last crossing of Hampton Roads by ferryboat from Newport News was made as the Hampton Roads Bridge Tunnel facility connecting Old Point Comfort and Willoughby Spit was officially opened to traffic.
- 1958 February 4 — Keel laying of the first atomic powered aircraft carrier, the *USS Enterprise* took place in a Newport News shipway.
- April 14 — Ground breaking for projected Sears store located on

redeveloped land between Huntington and Virginia Avenues and 26th and 28th Streets.

April 23 — A severe oil fire swept the Esso Bunker Terminal facility doing a million dollars worth of damage to tanks and stocks.

May 19 — Official seal for the new city of Newport News drawn by John Needre, approved for adoption by City Council.

July 1 — The city of Greater Newport News became an actuality as the third largest city in Virginia with 65-square mile area.

Summer — Shipyard begins a \$4 million plant expansion program including lengthening of submerged shipways to accommodate 1,100-foot nuclear powered carrier *Enterprise*.

1959 February 3 — Ground broken for Union Carbide Company's \$2 million dressing station. Plant put into pilot operation March 1960.

November 3 — Citizens approve at the polls a bond issue to cover a \$6 million expansion of the Newport News Waterworks for Diascund Dam and pipe line.

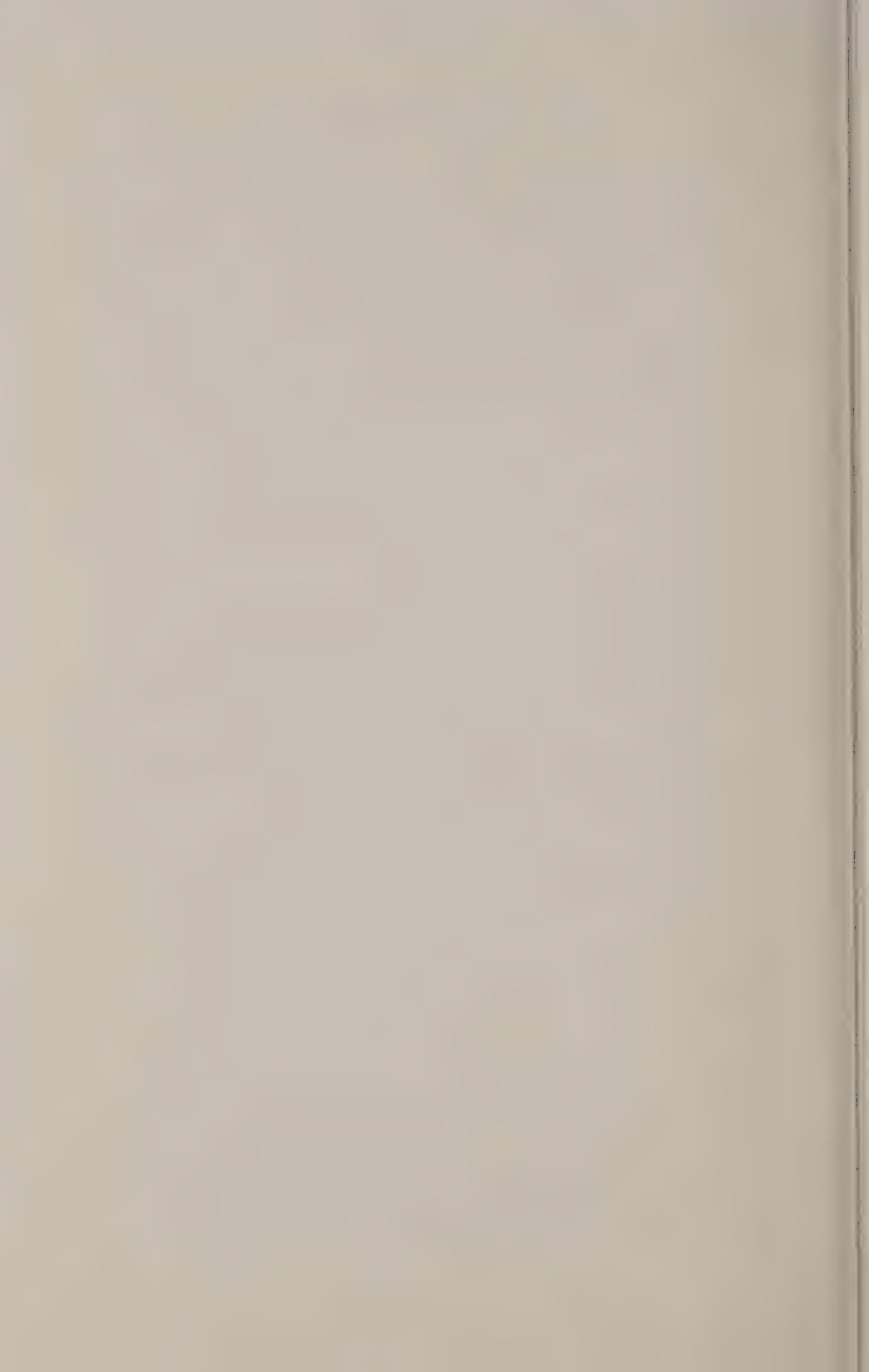
December 18 — Launching of the 380-foot, nuclear-powered, fleet ballistic missile submarine *Robert E. Lee* at the Shipyard.

1960 April 12 — City Council approves agreement with the Chesapeake and Ohio Railway Company to share expense of constructing two vehicular underpasses at Main Street and Center Avenue eliminating grade crossings—cost, approximately \$2 million.

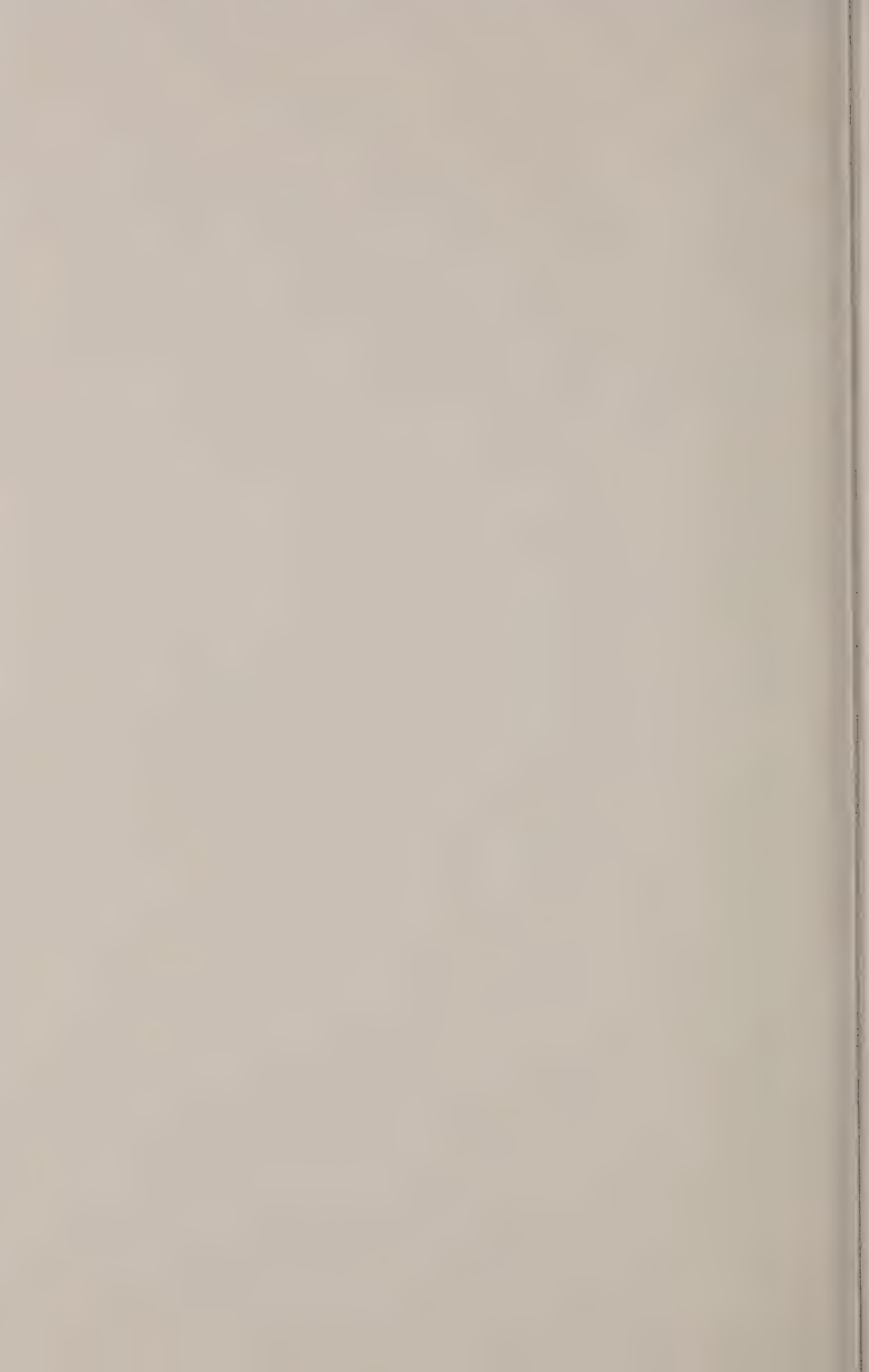
June 28 — Engineers stake out land for clearing ground for new \$7 million Riverside Hospital located off Route 60 on land acquired from The Mariners Museum.

September 12 — Hurricane "Donna" sweeps the Peninsula doing extensive damage.

September 24 — Christening of USS *Enterprise* at the Shipyard.



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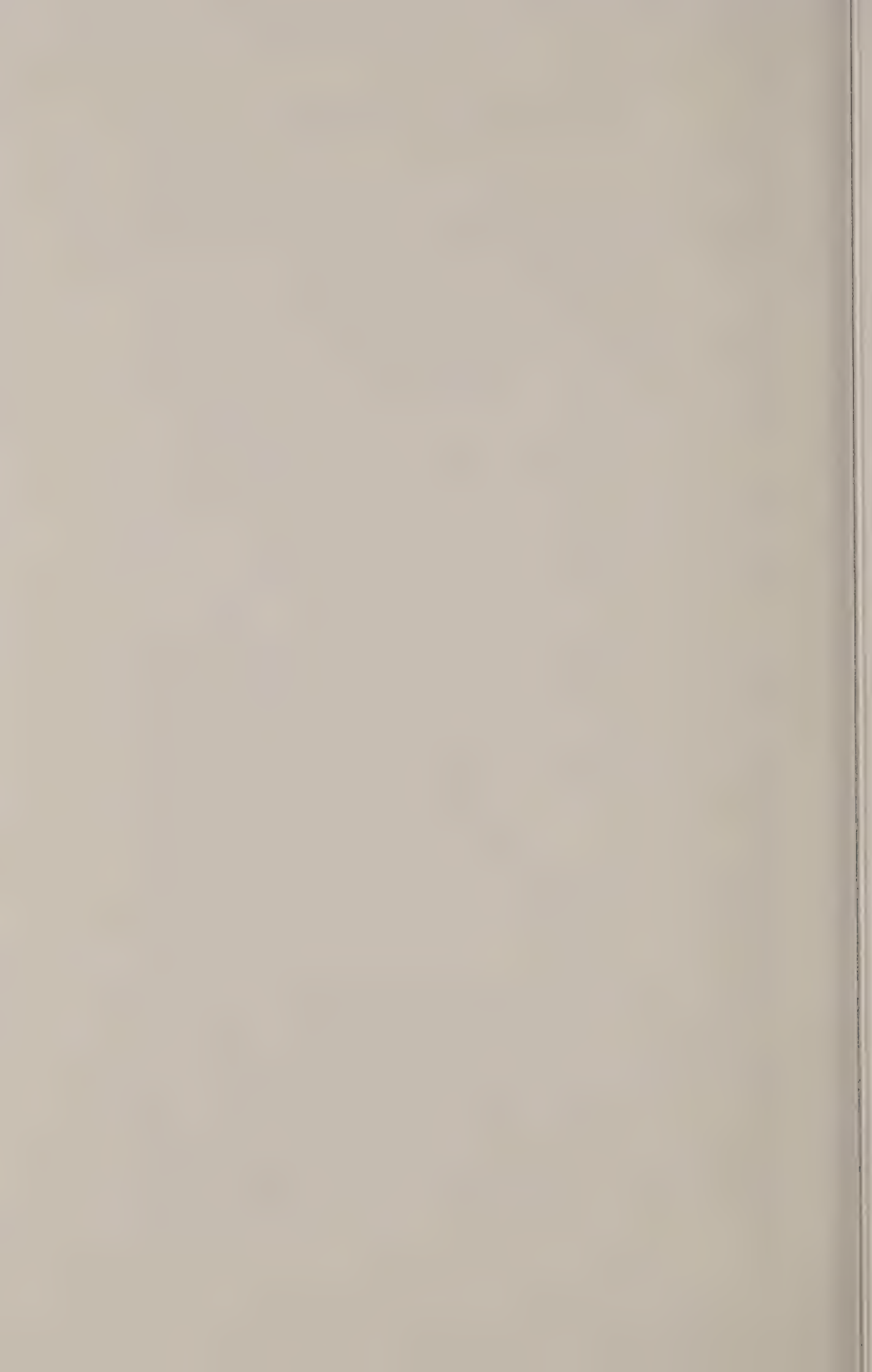
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I N D E X



Index

A

Abernathy, George T., 156
Academy of Music, 130
Accawmack, shire of, 31
Acre, The, 109, 114
Act of Attainder, 56, 58
Aircraft carriers, 150
Aldermen, Board of, 145
Allen, Lieut., 70
Almond, Governor J. Lindsay, Jr., 12
American Expeditionary forces, 141
American Merchant Marine, 132
American Oil Company, 170
Anderson, Major Robert, 98
Anderson Park, 167
Andrews, Hunter B., 8
Annapolis, forces embark from, 73
Appomattox, 86, 97
Apprentice School, 162, 163
Arlington, Lord, 55
Armistead, William, 35
Armistead's tide-mill, 45, 70
Armistice (1918), 141
Army of Potomac, 92
Arnold, General Benedict, 68, 69
Arrol, Mrs. J. O., 143
Aspinwall, William H., 47, 106, 107
Associated Press, 138
Association for Preservation of Virginia
 Antiquities, 106
Atlantic, gateway to, 169
Atlantic coast, 119
Australia, soldiers from, 142
Automobiles, 134
Aylett, Mrs. William Roane, 130

B

Backler, James, 50, 51
Bacon, Nathaniel, the younger, 55-57,
 59
Bacon's laws, 56, 58
Bacon's Rebellion, 55-59
Bailey, Charles Weaver, 139
Bailey, H. B., 128, 130
Baker's Neck, 49
Baldwin, Captain Thomas Scott, 136
Bank Holiday, 147
Banks, Joseph, 124
Barham, Claude M., 124
Barham, F. Baxter, vi, 11, 124

Barham, Judge T. J., 124, 125
Barrett, W. E., 159
Barron, Commodore James, 73
Barton's theater, 126
Battery D, 144
Bayles, Mrs. Florence, vii
Beachcombers, 129
Beasley, Benjamin, 78
Beaufort, N. C., 92
Beauregard, General G. T., 98
Bennett, Robert, 87
Bentley, William, 26, 43
Berkeley, Sir William (Governor), 37,
 55-57, 59
Bermuda Islands, 42
Bernard, Thomas, 27
Berry, Sir John, 57
Bickford, R. G., 142
Big Bethel, 89
Big freeze, 129
Biggins, Joseph C., city manager, vii,
 11, 12, 145, 174
Blackstone, J. W. G., 124
Bland, Giles, 56
Blandford, H. Wharton, 175
Blechman, Franklin O., 8
Blewett, W. E., Jr., 7, 123, 148
Blockhouse, 35
Bloodfield, 125
Blows (plantation), 82
Blunt, Humphrey, 17
Blunt Point, 17-19, 23, 34-36, 40
Bolthroe, 37, 45, 56
Bolton, William, 46
Booker, Mrs. Henry Wise, 47
Boulevard, 134
Bourbon, 35, 39, 40, 62
Bowen, William C., vii, 10
Brandon Heights, 41
Braxton, Col. Carter, 128
Brewer, John, 19, 23, 26
Brewer's land, 51
Briarfield, 81, 105
Briarfield Road, 27
Briggs, Vernon S., 156
British Remount Station, 136
Brittingham, Mayor O. J., Jr., vii, ix,
 10, 11
Brodie, Dr., 72
Brout, Albert T., 174
Brown, Captain, 71, 72
Brown, Alexander Crosby, vii, xii, 13

Brown, Dixon, 62
 Brown, Justice J. D. G., 125, 130
 Brown, John, 45
 Brown, Robert, 78
 Buckroe, 70, 133
 Burcher, A. E., 159
 Burcher, George W., 124
 Burcher, J. G., 86
 Burgesses, election for (1624), 33
 Burnham, W. C., 164
 Burwell's Ferry, 73
 Bush, Abraham, 39
 Bush, John, 22
 Business, in operation, 126
 Butler, General Benjamin F., 86, 87, 122
 Butler, Thomas, 50
 Buxton, J. A., 159
 Buxton, Dr. Russell von Lehn, 7-9

C

Caffee, Mrs. J. Hugh, 143
 Callis, Major, 70
 Camp Alexander, 139
 Camp Butler, 87, 88, 89, 92
 Camp Eustis, 139; also, see Fort Eustis
 Camp Hamilton, 89
 Camp Hill, 139
 Camp-in-the-Wilderness, 95
 Camp Patrick Henry, 152
 Camp Stuart, 139
 Campbell, Reverend W. A., 117
 Canadian Army, 136
 Canal, York to James projected, 106
 Canary Islands, 137
 Cape Hatteras, 92
 Capps, William, 25
 Captain Tucker's Creek, 25, 44
 Carlstrom, Victor, 136, 143
 Carolinas, British in, 68, 72
 Carpet baggers, 104, 107, 125
 "Carrieville," 42
 Cary, Henry, 36, 38, 46, 60
 Miles I (Sr.), 36, 38, 46
 Miles II (Jr.) of Richneck, 28, 36, 38, 46
 Miles IV of Persimmon Ponds, 39
 Miles (1729), 62
 Miles (1821), 30
 Miles of Ceeley's, 39
 Richard, 66
 Judge Richard of Peartree Hall, 38
 Thomas, 36, 38
 William, 28, 36
 Wilson (1781), 78; of Ceeley's, 39
 Wilson Miles, 44
 Cary family, 28
 Cary's Mills, 69
 Casey, Major General Silas, 92
 Casey's Division, 92, 93, 95
 Casino, 81, 115, 131, 137, 161
 Casino Park, 115
 Castle, Irene, 136
 Castle, Vernon, 136
 Cathorn, James, 35, 45
 John, 45
 William, 45
 Causey's mill, 35
 Causey's mill pond, 160
 Cedar Grove, vii, 42, 43, 88, 93, 99
 Cedar Lane, 94
 Ceeley, Thomas, 26, 39
 Ceeley's, 39, 46, 61
 Census, U.S. (1790), 78, 83, 177
 Center Avenue, 172
 Cervera, Admiral, 131
 Chamberlin (hotel), 132
 Chandler, John, 21
 Charles II, 55
 Charles, Henry, 57
 Charles City, shire of, 31
 Charles City Corporation, 25
 Charles River, shire of, 31
 Chesapeake Bay, 15, 17, 67, 68, 74
 Chesapeake Dry Dock and Construction Company, 4, 119
 Chesapeake and Ohio Railway, v, 52, 110-112, 114, 116, 119, 129, 141, 172-74; established, 3; extended, 109; grain elevators of, 111; encampment at, 131; role in World War II, 151, 152; terminals of, 80, 108; warehouses at, 139
 Chesapeake, Ohio and Southwestern Railway, 112, 113
 Chesapeakes, town of, 22
 Chisman, Edmund, 59
 Chisman, Thomas P., 8
 Christie, J. Fred, vii, 10, 174
 Christopher Newport College, 163
 Christopher Newport Park, 81, 115, 167
 Churches, churchwardens of, 48, 51; laws concerning, 48, 49; disestablishment of, colonial, 79, 80; vestry responsibilities, 49
 Churches, colonial: Denbigh, 50, 51; Lower at Denbigh, 51, 52; Nutmeg Quarter, 50, 51; Stanley Hundred, 49, 50; Upper at Mulberry Island, 51

- Churches, denominational: Baptist, 51, 52, 89, 116; Catholic, 117; Christian, 117; Disciples, 52; Episcopal, 52-54; Lutheran, 117; Methodist, 52, 117, 126; Presbyterian, 117
- Citizens and Marine Bank, 104
- Citizens and Marine Jefferson Bank, 104
- Civil War, 85-100
- Clarke, Miss Elizabeth, 54, 130
- Clarke, Miss Sally, 130
- Claus, Pettipiece, 26
- Clayton, Miss Mary, 116
- Clemons Library, map of Peninsula in, 73
- Clerks of Court, selection of, 28
- Clinton, Sir Henry (General), 67-69
- Cole, William I, 26
- Cole, Colonel William II, 24, 28, 36, 37, 56, 57, 59, 78, 80
- College Landing, 73
- Commissioners, county, 27, 32
- Committee of Safety, 65, 66
- Community Concert Association, 167
- Community Theater of the Virginia Peninsula, 168
- Confederate currency, 103
- Consolidation, Newport News and Warwick, 3-14
- Continental Association, 65
- Convention (1775), 65
- Copeland, Ralph, 86
- Cornwallis, Lord (General), 43, 67, 69, 72-74
- Cornwallis' map, 72
- Corporations, designated, 25
- Corse's brigade, 85
- Cosby, J. V., 134
- Coston, Mrs. S. S., vii
- Cottrell, W. E., 133
- Coulson, Lyonell, 26
- Court House elm, 28, 38
- Cox, William, 86
- Craney Island, 92
- Crawford, Carter, 60, 78
- Cripps, Zachariah, 26, 27, 38, 46
- Cruse, Carl, 137
- Cuba, 131
- Culpeper, Frances, 37
- Culpeper, Lord, 55
- Cumming, James M., 141
- Curle, Wilson, 81
- Curtis, Miss Betty, vii, 47, 76, 84, 99, 100
- Daniel Prentice, 47, 81
- Dr. Humphrey H. (Capt.), 47, 85, 86, 96
- James M., 81, 84, 124, 128, 155
- J. L., 86
- Mrs. Maria, 86, 96
- R. G., 86
- Robert, 86
- R. Bickford, 157
- Roberta, 84
- Simon, vii, 81, 155
- Thomas Cary, 84
- Thomas G. H., 86
- Curtis family, 43, 155
- Curtis Flying School, 136
- Cutler, Robert C., 7
- D
- Daily Press*, vii, 80, 127
- Dale, Sir Thomas, 16, 18
- Dam No. 1, fight at, 96
- Dancing Point, duel at, 37
- Daniels, Thomas, 27
- Darling, Frank, 141
- Davis, President Jefferson, 97
- Davis, Sumpter, 124
- Davis, Thomas, 43
- Deep Creek, 29, 32, 35, 45
- De Grasse, Admiral, 73, 74
- De La Warr, Lord, 18, 45
- Denbigh, 34, 36, 37, 45; court held at, 28; description of, 36; silk culture at, 61
- Denbigh Parish, 50, 51; plantation, 50, 60
- Derby's, 40, 44
- Deshazor, George S., Jr., vi, 156
- De Vries, Peter, 21
- Diascund Creek, 172
- Digges, Cole, 36, 37, 44
- Governor Edward, 36, 37
- William, 44, 78, 80
- Disney-on-the-Roads, 105
- Dorie Miller Recreation Center, 167, 168
- Dougherty, James, 124
- Douglas, C. E., 145
- Douglas, Margaret, 93
- Dow Chemical Company, 170
- Downman, John, 26
- Drewery, M. P., 86
- Driver, Miss Lottie, vi
- Dudley, William, 29
- Dunaway, T. S., Jr., 156
- Dundas, Colonel, 70

Dunmore, Governor, 66
Dunn, Thurmer, 80, 81

E

Each, Captain, 35
East India Company, Newport's service
in, 16
Education, 158-164
Elizabeth, Queen of Bohemia, 25
Elizabeth City Corporation, 25, 26, 31,
176
Elizabeth City County, 5-7, 80, 81, 89;
British raid in, 70; invested by
British, 72
Elizabeth City Shire, 31
Elizabethtown, Lexington and Big
Sandy Railroad, 112
Ellenson, Sol, vii
Emergency Fleet Corporation of U.S.
Shipping Board, 140
End View, vii, 43, 47, 73, 76, 82, 84-86,
97
Entailed lands, 40, 44, 79
Epes, Cary, 143
Professor H. H., 159
Captain William, 15
Eastern Shore, 56, 59
Eustis, Brigadier General Abraham, 143
Evans, Miss Cerinda W., vi, 160
Ewell, Colonel B. S., 85

F

Ferguson, Homer L., 12, 147
Mrs. Homer L., 12
Ferries, 60, 64, 134
Filmore, Thomas, 27
Finch, F. F., 134
First National Bank, 126, 159
Fishing, 127, 165
Fisk, Harvey, 106
Flaxington, R. F., 8
Flint, Lieut. (Capt.), Thomas, 19, 23,
26
Forest, The, 38, 44, 46
Fort Crawford, 82
Fort Eustis, 4, 39, 82, 111, 143, 152, 170
Fort Monroe, 4, 85, 140, 169
Fort Sumter, S.C., 85, 98
Freedman's Bureau, 103
French fleet, 74
Frost, John I, vi

G

Gardening, 168
Garrow, Frank, 64
Garrow, Pat, 64
Gates, General, 67
Gates, I. E., 116
Giddings, Calvin, 105, 107
Chauncey, 107
Edwin, 107
Mary, 107
Giles, John, 56
Glebe lands, 51, 52
Gloucester, 74, 171
Godby, Thomas, 43
Golf Clubs, 165
Gookin, Daniel (Sr., Esq.), 20, 21, 24
Daniel, Jr., 21, 24
Elizabeth, 24
John, 21
Gookin plantation, 44
Gordon, Douglas, 54
Mrs. Douglas Huntly, 130
Gordon's ice house, 125
Grant, General Ulysses S., 97, 98
Grant's army, 96
Gravatt, J. J., 53
Graves, Arthur, 78
Green, Dr. Benjamin W., 82
Green, J. A., 86
Gregg, Capt. James, 136, 143
Grenville, Sir Richard, 22
Griffith and Lewis, 126
Grove wharf, 73
Gum Grove, 53, 111, 159
Gwynn's Island, 66

H

Haley, James, 57
"Half-acre," 109, 119
Half-way house, 92
Hallett Act, 9, 10, 13
Ham, Colonel, 160
Hamlin, E. S., 105, 109
Hampton, 4, 6, 72, 92, 165, 170, 171;
British at, 67; burning of, 88; in-
corporated, 7, 13; Symes-Eaton
fund for, 158
Hampton Roads, v, 9, 15, 39, 88, 97,
110, 111, 119, 131, 165, 176, 177;
British in, 67, 68, 72, 82; ferry
across, 134; park on, 167; port
development at, 173; tunnel, 111,
134

Hampton Roads Academy, 161, 174
 Hampton Roads Garden Club, 168
 Hampton Roads Port of Embarkation, 5,
 150-153
 Hansford, Thomas, 59
 Harlow, John, 51
 Harpersville, 27, 39
 Harrison, Fairfax, 46
 Harrison, Lieut. George, 37
 Harrison, Mary, tomb of, 52
 Harvey, Sir John, 58
 Harwood, Mrs., 74
 Edward, 78
 Elizabeth Reade, 81
 Humphrey, 28, 47
 J. L., 86
 Sheldon J., 124
 Thomas, 19, 26, 27, 36, 49
 T. M., 86
 William, 82
 Colonel William, 65, 66, 75, 82
 Mrs. W. W., 160, 161
 Harwood family, 43
 Harwood's Mill, 40; pond, 121
 Harwood's race field, 62
 Haughton, Armistead, 93, 105
 Hautz butcher shop, 127
 Hawkins, Anthony, 80, 81
 William, 81
 Hawkins farm, 81; house, 128, 130
 Hawkins-Melson tract, 105
 Haynes, Anthony, 57
 Hell's Half Acre, 109, 125
 Hely, Mr. Willis, 54
 Henrico, Corporation of, 25; Shire of, 31
 Hequembourg, Ted, 136, 143
 Hiden, Philip W., 12, 143, 145
 Mrs. Philip W., vii, 12
 Hiden Storage and Forwarding Com-
 pany, 139
 Highways, 139, 171, 172
 Hilton, 4, 30, 40, 41, 140, 141, 155, 156
 Hoffman, General W., 98
 Holland, Richard, 62
 Holloway, Hugh G., 156
 Hopkins, Albert L., 138
 Hopkins, W. T., 145
 Horse breeding, 62
 Houston, Colonel Harry, 7
 Howard, Harry, 159
 Hudgins, Holder, 66
 Huffman, Colonel E. W., 161
 Hughes, James F., 124
 Huntington, Archer M., 166

Huntington, Collis P., v, 105-109, 112,
 113, 116, 119, 120, 160, 166
 Huntington Avenue, 114, 133
 Huntington family, 150
 Huntington Garden Club, 168
 Huntington Park, 12, 165, 167
 Huntington Rifles, 144
 Hussey, H. M., Sr., 157, 175
 Hutchens, Charles K. (Sr.), 7
 Hutchinson, General Grote (Colonel),
 139

I

Ibbison, Percival, 43
 Indians: Chesapeake, 16; Kecoughtans,
 16, 17; Nansemond, 43
 Ironclads, fate of, 91, 92
 Irvine, John, 174
 Isle of Wight County, 31
 Italian Service Units, 152
 Ivy Avenue, 134

J

James I, 25
 James City Corporation, 25
 James City County, 166, 170
 James City Shire, 31
 James River bridge, 12, 44, 111, 171
 James River Golf and Country Club,
 165
 Jamestown, 18, 55, 56, 59, 73; Ist
 Assembly at (1619), 25; Queen's
 visit to (1957), 171
 Jarvis, Simpson, 175
 Jeffreys, Colonel Herbert, 57
 Jefferson, Thomas (Gov.), 36, 67
 Jester, Lewis T., vii
 Johnson, J. Cargill, 7
 Johnson's Opera House, 126, 130
 Johnston, General Joseph E., 94
 Jones, Allan, vi
 Allen, 40
 D. S., 124
 John, 33
 John Pembroke, 40, 47, 141
 Mathew, 35, 40, 62
 Mathew II, 40
 Captain Robert, 24
 William, 30
 Justices, county, 32

K

Kearney, Judge Frank, 8, 14

Kecoughtan, 13, 15; annexation of, 177;
 Burgesses for, 25; Indian village
 at, 15; defined, 16; population
 (1926), 177
 Kecoughtan Corporation, 25
 Kecoughtan Veterans Facility, site of
 Indian village, 16
 Keith, George, 49
 Keith's (Skiffe's) Creek, 20, 25, 27, 178
 Kelly, Walter, 130
 Kempe, William, 26
 Kentucky, district of, 83; state of, 83
 Kenworthy, C. E., 138
 Kilpatrick, General John R., 151
 Kingsmill wharf, 73
 Kirby, Colonel, 82
 Kliewer, L. W., 174
 Knewstep, Capt., 130
 Krause, Major Charles F. L., 144

L

Lafayette, General, 73, 74, 114
 Lafayette Avenue, 114
 Lafayette Esquadille, 136
 Lafayette House, 114
 Lake Maury, 19, 42, 45, 160, 166
 Land patents, 18, 19, 23
 Land titles, 28, 29
 Land's End, 81
 Langhorne, Capt. John, 43, 57
 Langhorne, William, 65, 75
 Langley Air Force Base, 4, 169
 Lash, M. H., 126, 127
 Lawrence, John, 51
 Lee, Martha, 47, 107
 Richard Decauter, 41, 47, 97, 107
 General Robert E., 97
 Robert H., 105
 Thomas W., 105
 William (Sr.), 93, 99, 104, 105, 107
 Lee family, 80, 120
 Lee Hall, 41, 43, 74, 97, 111, 112, 140
 Lee Hall lake, 47, 106, 121
 Lee Hall Reservoir, 41
 Lee's Mill, 95, 96
 Lend-Lease shipments, 151
 Lenz, F. C., 124
 Lester, J. Cooper, 174
 Lett, R. M., 146
 Lewelling, John, 86
 Ligon, Professor E. L., 161
 Little Bethel, 89
 Lincoln, President, 85
 Lincoln Park, 165

Livezey, Walter B., vii, 107, 143
 Lochhead, John L., vi
 Longstreet, General, 85
 Look-out Point, 3, 13, 15
 Low, A. A., 106
 Lower Land's End, 81
 Lower Norfolk County, 31
 Lucas Creek, 37, 38, 45
 Ludwell, Thomas, 59

M

Maffit, Mrs., 42
 Captain J. N., 42
 Magpie Swamp, 38
 Magruder, General Bankhead, 89
 Main Street, 172; Library, 83, 167
 Mallicote, F. P., 86
 S. H., 86
 Mallory, Captain (Colonel) Edward, 67,
 71, 72
 Malvern Hill, 86
 Manassas, 89
 Marie's Mount, 21, 44, 49, 158, 178
 Mariners' Museum, The, 35, 42, 50,
 166; Library, vi, 167
 Maritime Commission, 149
 Marshall, John, 36
 Massacre, Indian (1622), 21
 Mathews, Captain Samuel (Governor),
 19, 26, 28, 29, 36, 37, 50, 58
 Mathews County, 171
 Mathews Manor, 36
 Matthews, L. E., 157
 Mayo, Reverend C. J. S., 53
 Meadows, John N., 174
 Melson, Indiana, 81
 Melson building, 81
 Menchville, 111
 Merrie Oaks, 41, 47
 Merry, Thomas, 28, 47
 Merry Point, 43, 44
 Middle House, 82
 Milford, 40
 Military Courts, 103
 Mill Creek, 89
 Mills, water, 34, 40
 Milstead, E. W., 124, 128
 Minton Drive, 172
 Molindus (Menendez), 3
 Monetary system, change in, 79
 Monfalcone, Alfred M., vii, 10, 11
 Montague, E. Sclater, 8
 Moore, G. L., 86
 Morris, J. Clyde, 156

Morris, Major Robert, 84
 Morrison, 39, 53, 111, 139, 159, 160
 Morrison, Captain J. S., 111
 Moryson, Colonel Francis, 57, 59
 Moseley, Thomas, 60
 Mosquito fleet, 73
 Mulberry Island, 17, 18, 27, 35, 39,
 54, 176, 178; acquired by U.S.,
 82, 139; Burgesses for, 26; church
 on, 20, 49, 52, 54; farms on, 81,
 82; ferries at, 60, 78; Harwood
 plantation on, 19; ordinaries on, 60
 Mulberry Island Parish, boundaries of,
 51
 Mulberry Point, 18
 Murchison, Marvin M., Jr., vii, 10

Mc

McClellan, Major General George B.,
 43, 85, 90, 92, 94
 McClellan's army, 91
 McIntosh, Enos, 62
 McLaughlin, Mike, 124
 McMurran, Lewis A. (Jr.), vii, 7, 175
 McVey, Mathew, 78

N

Nash, V. W., 86
 National Aeronautics and Space Admin-
 istration, 4, 170
 Naval Disarmament Conference, 4, 146
 Naval Holiday, 146
 Negroes, 119, 122, 125, 168
 Neuce, Captain Thomas, 20, 23
 Captain William, 20, 24
 New Kent County, waterworks expan-
 sion in, 172
 Newmarket, 64; creek, 44
 New Norfolk County, 31
 New Orleans, railway diverted to, 113
 Newman, John, 48
 Newman, Richard, vii, 7, 8, 13
 Newport, Captain Christopher, 3, 15,
 16; mural painting of, vi; voyages
 to Virginia by, 16, 22
 Newport News (Newport's News), 3,
 27, 108, 110, 112, 113, 147; ad-
 ministrative offices of, 156; advan-
 tages at, 108; airport in, 171;
 annexation to sought, 155; area of,
 3, 4, 12; back country of, 171;

bond issues, 172; bridges, 133;
 British at (1780-81), 67, 70, 71;
 business in, 126, 171; chartered
 (1896), 3, 124, 155; (1958), 10;
 citizens of, 176; city farm, 37;
 city managers of (1920-1958), 145,
 146; Common Council, 124, 145;
 consolidation of, 10-12, 154; county
 seat, 30; cultural advantages, 165-
 168; depression in (1929-1933),
 147, 149; debarkation at, W.W. I,
 141, 142; described, (1623), 34;
 finances of, 6, 11; Fort Eustis
 in, 4, 170; economic strength of,
 169; embarkation at (1898), 131;
 escheat land at, 80; glebe at, 49;
 golf club in, 165; Gookin planta-
 tion at, 20, 21, 44, 158; govern-
 ment of, 145, 148; Hampton Roads
 Port of Embarkation at, 151; har-
 bor of, 3, 105, 106, 108, 109, 120,
 169; highways in, 140, 171, 172;
 hospital in, 115; hotels in, 115;
 improvements in, 134, 135, 172;
 imports, 3, 173; Indian territory,
 16; Industrialization, 120, 170,
 174; influenza in, 141; interned
 ships at, 137; invaded (1862),
 92; labor in, 119, 120, 170; land
 owners in, 80, 81, 105; law and
 order in, 125; Libraries, vi, 167;
 master plan for, 174; military oper-
 ations at (1776), 66; (1861),
 87-90, 92; name of, v, 15, 16;
 naval operations at (1780-81), 67,
 70, 71; (1861-62), 90, 91; officials
 of, 10, 124; ordinances, 127, 146;
 palisade at, 21; parks in, 167; park-
 ing in, 171; population, 3-5, 12,
 153, 176, 177; port of, 77, 113,
 119, 139, 151, 173; prisoners of
 war at, 98, 152; recreation in, 165;
 redevelopment in, 173, 175; re-
 mount station at, 136; sanitary
 system of, 134, 172; schools in,
 158, 159, 162; seal of, 28; ship-
 building at (1776), 66; small boat
 harbor at, 133; terminus at, 3, 109,
 110, 112, 114; trade in, 113, 169;
 transportation, 110, 112, 122, 132,
 133, 171; underpasses, 172; utili-
 ties, 132; voting precinct, 30; water-
 works acquired by, 121, 123; water-
 ways in, 34; yellow fever scare
 (1899), 129

Newport News Academy, 161
 Newport News and Hampton Railway,
 Gas and Electric Company, 132
 Newport News and Mississippi Valley
 Company, 112, 113
 Newport News creek, 44
 Newport News Female Seminary, 160
 Newport News Light and Water Com-
 pany, 121, 132
 Newport News, Old Point Railway and
 Electric Company, 133
 Newport News Operatic Society, 167
 Newport News Planning Commission,
 174
 Newport News plantation, 21, 24, 37,
 80
 Newport News Public Library, Inc.,
 vi, 83, 128, 167
 Newport News Redevelopment and
 Housing Authority, 173, 175
 Newport News Shipbuilding and Dry
 Dock Company, v, 3, 4, 5, 12,
 120, 138, 140, 149, 150, 162
 Newport News War Memorial Recrea-
 tion Building, 168
 Newport News Waterworks, 35, 40,
 41, 47, 121, 122, 172
 Newport's News Point, v, 77, 80, 83,
 159; British at (1781), 70, 71;
 secured (1861), 85, 87, 90; camp
 at, 93; terminus at, 108, 109; West
 farm at, 104
 Newspapers, 127, 130
 Newton, J. K. M., 124
 Newton, Miss Sarah, 160
 Noland, L. U. (Sr.), 145
 Norfolk, 88, 91, 108, 111, 151; site of
 Indian village, 16
 Norfolk County, 31
 North Carolina, refugees flee to, 93
 Northwest territory, 77
 Nuclear propulsion, 121
 Nutmeg Quarter, 26; Parish, 50, 51

O

Oak Grove, 41
 Oak Hall, 41
 O'Donnell, J. J., 124, 159
 Old Dominion Land Company, 41, 121,
 132, 134, 139; organized, 114; pur-
 chased, 121, 123; school sites given
 by, 159; transfer of land to, 106
 Old Point, 90; Butler at, 86; Cornwallis
 at, 72; McClellan at, 92

One Hundred and Sixteenth Infantry
 Regiment, 142, 144
 O'Neill, Grace, 42
 Ordinaries, 60
 Oriana, 111
 Overseas, troops depart for (1918), 140
 Oyster Point, 39, 111, 161

P

Panama Canal, 132, 142
 Paramount Motion Picture Theater, 130
 Parker, William, 43
 Parks, 166, 167, 174
 Particular Plantation, defined, 21
 Patrick, D. C., 86
 Patrick, E. C., 86
 Patrick Henry Airport, 171
 Patrick Henry staging area, 152, 171
 Pauley, John, 51
 Pear Avenue, 177
 Pearl Harbor, 150
 Peartree Hall, 38, 39, 61
 Peirce, General Ebenezer F., 89
 Peirsey, Abraham, 36, 37, 45
 Peninsula Choral Society, 167
 Peninsula Electric Light and Power
 Company, 132
 Peninsula Railway Company, 133
 Peninsula Symphony Orchestra, 167
 Peninsular Campaign, 88, 90
 Peppett, Lieut. Gilbert, 23
 Percy, George, 23
 Perkins, Carter, 124
 Persimmon Ponds, 27, 39
 Petersburg, Cornwallis' arrival at, 72
 Peterson, L. B., 175
 Peterson Yacht Basin, 165
 Phelps, Colonel J. W., 88
 Phillips, John, 51
 Phillips, Sinclair, 7, 8, 174
 Phoebus, 6, 7, 129
 Pianketank, 17
 Pickett's division, 85
 Pierce, Joane, 18
 Pierce, William, Capt. of Guard at
 Jamestown, 18, 23
 Pig Point, 88
 Pine Beach, 134
 Plundering Expeditions, British, 70, 71
 Pocahontas, 18
 Pochins, 17
 Point Hope, 15
 Poole, Robert, 23, 54
 Port City, 9

Port of Embarkation, World War I,
139
 Portsmouth, 14, 71, 72, 88
 Post, Walter A., 124
 Post Office, 126
 Potash Creek, 37, 38, 45
 Pountis, John, 47
 "Poverty row," 116
 Powell, James, 86
 Powell, Thomas Temple, 159
 Powhatan, 17
 Pressey, B. J., 134
 Prince Philip, 171
 Princess Anne County, 31
 Prisoners of war (1865), 98; (1944-
45), 152
 Purefoy, Captain Thomas, 26

Q

"Quality row," 116
 Queen Elizabeth II, 171
 Queen's Hith (Hundred), 19, 20, 49
 Quincy, Colonel Edmund, 24
 Quincy family, 21, 24

R

Ranshaw, Samuel, 28
 Rawlings, Admiral N. L., 7
 Reconstruction, 103
 Recreation, 61-64, 165, 166
 Red Cross, 142
 Refugees (1862), 93
 Religion, change in, 79
 Rent Roll (1704), 176
 Revolutionary War, 65-75; changes
wrought by, 78, 79
 Rhodes, B. E., 175
 Rice, Swan, 57
 Rich, Robert, Earl of Warwick, 19, 23
 Richards, Dick, 126
 Richman, Joe, 175
 Richmond, 91, 93, 94, 96, 97, 106, 115,
129
 Richneck, 28, 38, 45
 Riley, Thomas J., 159
 Rivermont, 104
 Rivers: Back, 70, 176; Northwest
Branch of, 31
 Elizabeth, 92
 Hampton, 15
 James, v, 3, 15-17, 21, 35, 43, 67-
69, 72, 73, 82, 85, 97, 114, 115,
119, 165-167, 171

Mattaponi, 108
 Nansemond, 25, 67, 88
 New Poquoson, 25, 35, 40
 Old Poquoson, 31
 Pamunkey, 108
 Pianketank, 108
 Poquoson, 158
 Powhatan (James), 13
 Southampton, 31
 Warwick, 17, 18, 19, 27, 32, 34,
35, 37, 45; port at, 60; town on,
29
 York, 16; canal projected from, 106
 Robinson, E. W., 124
 Rochambeau, General, 73, 74
 Roecroft, Captain Edward, 15
 Rolfe, Elizabeth, 18
 Rolfe, John, 18
 Roscow, William, 27, 40

S

Salter's Creek, 35, 139, 177; Park, 174
 Savage's Station, 86
 Saylor's Creek, 86
 Scarburg, William, 56
 Schmelz Brothers, 127
 Schools, 53, 146, 158-163, 172, 174
 Scone's Dams, 27, 64
Scribner's Monthly, 108
 Seafood, 35, 170, 171
 Seals, James, 125
 Sears store, 116
 Seawell's Point, 91
 Selden plantation, 70
 Selective Service, 153
 Seven Pines, 86, 94
 Shannahan, John N., 121, 123
 Sheild, Judge Conway H., Jr., 8, 9, 14
 Shell road, 133
 Shelly, 82
 Shelly Hill, 42
 Shield, R. S., 124
 Shipbuilding, 66, 131, 146, 147, 149,
150, 169
 Ships: *Abigaile*, 35
America, 149
Appam, 137, 138, 143
Arcadia, 137
Ariel, 110
Arkansas, 131
Budapest, 137
Columbia, 129
Congress, 90
Constellation, 146

- Coral Sea, 153
 Cumberland, 90, 91
 Da Kalb, 137
 Discovery, 3
 Dorothy, 121
 Eitel Frederick, 137
 El Sud, 121
 Enterprise, 123, 149
 Essex-class, 150, 153
 Florida, 42
 Flying Harte, 20
 George, 45
 Godspeed, 3
 Harriet Lane, 88
 Illinois, 131
 Iowa, 146
 Jefferson, 68
 John and Francis, 22
 Kearsage, 131
 Kentucky, 131
 Kronprinz Wilhelm, 137
 Lady Charlotte, 66
 Leviathan, 147
 Lewis, 68
 Liberty, 68
 Lusitania, 138
 Maine, 131
 Mary and Margaret, 22
 Matsonia, 144
 Merrimac, 90-92
 Midway, 121, 153
 Minnesota, 90, 91
 Missouri, 131, 153
 Moewe, 137
 Monitor, 90-92
 Patriot, 68, 71
 Providence, 21
 Puritan, 120
 Ranger, 149
 Seaventure, 22, 42
 Submarines, 123
 Susan Constant, 3
 Thetis, 68
 Virginia, C. S. S. (Merrimac), 90
 Virginia, passenger steamer, 111
 Virginian, 144
 Von Steuben, 137
 Wauketa, 111
 West Point, 149
 Weyanoke, 128-130
 Yorktown I, 149
 Shipyard (N.N.S. & D.D.Co.), 119,
 138, 146, 147, 149, 150, 153, 160;
 payrolls of (1888 & 1060), 123
 Shires, eight original (1634), 26;
 named, 31
 Shreeves, Mrs. Evelyn, vi
 Skiffe's Creek, 20, 25, 27, 41, 97, 121,
 178; also see Keith's Creek
 Skowen's (Scone's) Dams, 27
 Small Boat Harbor, 25, 44, 133, 136,
 139, 165
 Smith, C. C., 145
 Smith, Doug, 94, 124
 Smith, E. O., 164
 Smith, Godfrey L., 145
 Smith, Judge Herbert G., 7-9, 12, 14
 Smith, Hezekiah, 80
 Smith, Captain John, 16
 Smith, Captain Nelson (II), vii
 Smith, Captain Nelson (I), 42, 88, 93,
 94
 Smith, Mrs. Nelson, 93
 Smith, Major General Robert, 59
 Smith, Robert B., vii, 10
 Smith, Captain Roger, 18, 23
 Smith's map, 13, 22
 Smola, E., 137
 Soldier's Home, yellow fever scare at,
 129
 Southern Pacific Company, 112, 113
 Spanish-American War, 131, 136
 Spanish influenza, 141
 Spanish Navy, 131
 Sports, 61-63, 165, 166
 Stanley Hundred, 19, 27, 51
 Stanley precinct, 19
 State Ports Authority, 173
 Stauffer, William T., vii, 80
 Stephens, Garrett, 50
 Stephens (Stevens), Mrs. Elizabeth, 45
 Captain Richard, 26, 37
 Captain Samuel, 37, 56
 Stock Market crash, 147
 Stokes, Christopher, 26
 Stoney Run, 30, 38, 45, 64, 79; county
 seat moved to, 29
 Strachey, William, 17
 Swann's Point, 59
 Swem, Dr. E. G., vii, 46
 Swinerton, John R., 118
 Symes, Benjamin, 158, 163
 Symes-Eaton fund, 158

T

- Tabb, J. L., 86
 Tabb, L. P., 86
 Tabb house (Hampton), 104

Tactical Air Command, 4
 Tarleton, Lieut. Col. Banistre, 69
 Tatham, William, horticulturist, 39
 Tatnall, Commander, 92
 Taylor, Anne, 46
 Taylor, Thomas, 27, 37, 38
 Teachers, pay of, 146
 Thacker, Charles E., editor, 127
 Thom, Major Leslie G., 145
 Thomas, Cash, 130
 Thompson, Lieut. George, 26
 Thoroughgood, Adam, 21, 26
 Tignall, Thomas, 50
 Tobacco, culture of, 61; storehouse for, 29
 Todd's Lane, 117
 Tournaments, 63, 64
 Town Point, 29, 32
 Transportation Corps of Army Service Service Forces, 152
 Trebell's (Grove wharf), 73
 Trotter, P. D., 156
 Tucker, Captain William, 25, 31
 Tulley, E. R., 86
 Twenty-ninth Division, 142, 144
 Tyndall's map, 22

U

Union, fate of, 97
 Union Carbide Ore Company, 170
 Union Chapel, 116, 117
 United States Army Transportation Training Command, 4
 United States Continental Army Command, 4
 United States Military District No. 1, 103
 United States Shipping Board Emergency Fleet Corporation, 41
 Upper Land's End, 81, 84
 Upper Norfolk County, 31
 Utilities, 132

V

Van Buren, W. R., Jr., 8
 Versailles, France, 77
 Via, George, 124
 Victory Arch, 141
 Victory Avenue, 141
 Virginia, Assembly (1776), 66; constitution for (1775), 65; Convention (1775), 65; tax list (1782-85), 78, 176

Virginia Central and the Covington and Ohio Railroads, 108
 Virginia Company of London, 3, 15, 18, 20, 21, 34, 48
 Virginia Electric and Power Company, 170
 Virginia Historical Society, vi, 95
 Virginia Navigation Company, 110
 Virginia State Library, vi, 95
 Virginia State Navy, 73, 76

W

Wall, W. L., 86
 Walls, Captain, 71
 War Memorial Museum of Virginia, 12, 167
 War of 1812, 82
 Ward, Paul S., vii, 10, 157
 Ware, Mrs. Katherine M., 156
 Warehouses, 139
 Warroquoake (Isle of Wight), shire of, 31
 Warwick, Burgesses from (1629), 26; in Chesterfield County, 69; city of, 3, 7, 156; consolidation in, 154
 Warwick, Earl of, 19
 Warwick Beauregards, 85, 86, 96
 Warwick Boulevard, 160, 172
 Warwick County, 3, 6, 27, 30, 78, 79, 81, 132, 141, 149, 155; Bacon's Rebellion in, 57; Board of Supervisors of, 156; bounds of, 27, 39, 92; British raids in, 68, 70, 72, 74; Commissioners of, 27, 28; Committee of Safety of, 66; Court at Richneck, 38; education in, 158, 159; government of, 26, 27, 155, 156; invaded, 92, 93, 95-97; plundering in (1861), 87; population of, 5, 78, 155, 156, 176-178; railroad stations in, 111; tombstone inscriptions of, 46; staging area in, 152; town in (1680-1809), 29; waterways in, 34
 Warwick County Court Records, vi, 46, 95, 96
 Warwick County Minute Book (1748-62), 82
 Warwick Court House, 28, 30, 32, 122, 155, 156, 157; description of (1862), 95; removal of, 45, 64, 79, 123; Tarleton at, 69
 Warwick Hotel, 114, 115, 138
 Warwick Parish, 51

- Warwick River Shire, 3, 26, 31, 36
 Warwick Road (Warwick Boulevard,
 also Route 60), 92, 94
 Warwickshire Corporation, 141
 Warwicktown, 29, 32, 45, 60, 61, 79
 Washington, General George, 43, 73,
 74
 Washington, D.C., 89
 Washington Avenue, 114, 120
 Washington Naval Disarmament Con-
 ference, 4, 146
 Water View, 82
 Waters, Lieut. (Capt.) Edward, 19,
 26, 42, 43
 Waters Creek, 19, 34, 40, 42, 43, 45, 49
 Watkins, W. T., Sr., 175
 Watson, Mrs. Susan, 93
 Wayne, General Anthony, 69
Wedge, The, 130
 West, Frances (Greville), 45
 West, George Ben, 83, 103, 104, 109,
 116, 161
 West, Nathaniel, 45
 West, Parker, 80, 83, 85, 87, 93, 103,
 104, 109
 West Avenue, 114, 116
 West family, 104
 West Indies, 15
 West Point, N. Y., 68
 West Point, Va., 108
 Westward movement, 77
 Wheeler, Major W. R., 151
 Whitaker, Captain Richard, 28
 Whitby, William, 27, 43
 White, Fairmount R., 144
 White House, 82
 Wilbern, William, 107
 Wilbern's (Wilbern farm), 80, 85, 105
 Wilder, Captain, 104
 Willett, J. A., Sr., 123, 124
 William and Mary, College of, 36, 163;
 Library, vi
William and Mary College Quarterly,
 80
 Williams, C. L., vii
 Williams, Mrs. Joel, 157
 Williamsburg, 38, 66, 96, 97, 106, 110,
 171
 Williamsburg Restoration, 106
 Willoughby, Lieut. Thomas, 26
 Wills, Angelica, 45
 Wills, Emanuel, 28
 Wills, Matthew, 60, 78
 Wilson, Mary, 40
 Wilson, Colonel William, 40
 Wilson, Major William, 39
 Windmill Point, 37, 38
 Wood, John, 52
 Woodward, J. B., Jr., 7-9
 World War I, 136-144
 World War II, 149-154
 Wright, M. D., 125
 Wyatt, Sir Francis (Governor), 19
 Wythe, George, 36, 45
- Y
- Yardley, Sir George, 19, 23
 Yellow fever scare, 129
 York County, 31, 35, 58, 72, 166, 170
 York River bridge, 171
 Yorktown, 43, 72, 74, 92, 97, 108,
 140; celebration at (1881), 110;
 city planned at, 106; Cornwallis
 at, 73; surrender at, 77
 Yorktown Centennial, 114
 Yonge, Anthony, 50
 Young, Richard, 29, 32, 37, 45, 61, 64
 Young's mill, 34, 96; entrenchments at,
 94

ERRATA

Correct to, as follows:

P. vii, para. 1, line 6: Murchison.

P. 88, para. 4, line 3 from bottom: before and after.

P. 88, para. 4, line 2 from bottom, insert before July: planned.

P. 89, para. 1, line 17: insert after Big Bethel, 10 June 1861, (inadvertently omitted).

P. 109, para. 3, line 16 at end: E. S.

P. 113, para. 1, line 1: Southern.

